

**PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE**  
**BROOKLINE**  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**FOR 1959 - 1963**



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BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY

1963

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The compiling of this volume of the proceedings of the Brookline Historical Society, covering several years, has required much labor on the part of its editor, our fellow member

CHARLES B. BLANCHARD

The officers and trustees of our Society hereby express to him, on behalf of all our members, our thanks and gratitude for a job well done. His many years of experience with such work and his devotion to this particular undertaking have produced a volume of wide coverage and outstanding interest which we shall all enjoy.

## **OFFICERS**

**1959**

### **PRESIDENT**

DONALD K. PACKARD

### **VICE-PRESIDENT**

S. MORTON VOSE

### **TREASURER**

J. FREDERICK NELSON

### **CLERK**

OWEN M. CARLE

### **TRUSTEES**

Kenneth B. Bond, Mrs. Harrison G. Bridge,  
Miss Elizabeth Butcher, James M. Driscoll, Lea S. Luquer,  
Miss Maud Oxenham, Mrs. Gardner Washburn  
and the officers ex-officio

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## **SUMMARY REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1959**

The Annual Meeting was held at the Edward Devotion House on January 18, 1959. President Packard presided.

The usual reports from the Treasurer, Chairman of the Committee on Rooms, etc., were read and approved. Mr. Daniel Tyler, Jr., Chairman of the Nominating Committee, submitted the following names: For Clerk and Trustee, Owen M. Carle; for Treasurer and Trustee, J. Frederick Nelson; for Trustees, Kenneth B. Bond, Mrs. Harrison G. Bridge, Miss Elizabeth Butcher, James M. Driscoll, Lea S. Luquer, Miss Maud Oxenham, Donald K. Packard, S. Morton Vose and Mrs. Gardner Washburn. They were elected.

The following were proposed and elected as members: Mrs. Clare B. Dewart, Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Morse, Miss Helen Lavey, Jason A. Aisner, John T. Noonan, Jr., Leonard W. Wolfe, Michael Robbins, Miss Patricia A. Townsend and Robert C. Cochrane, Jr.

After the business meeting, Mr. Russell Hastings, Chairman of the Planning Board, spoke briefly and was followed by Mr. Justin

Gray, Brookline's Resident Planner, who talked informally about "Planning Brookline's Future."

At a meeting of the Trustees on March 17th, Donald K. Packard was re-elected as President and S. Morton Vose as Vice-President. Mrs. Bridge suggested that we watch carefully the Punch Bowl Tavern plaque at Brookline Village lest it be lost if the building is demolished. She suggested also that a record of plaques be maintained.

At the May 12th meeting of the Trustees, Mr. Driscoll reported that Mr. Packard had presented him with a plaque to be put up on the Town Pound. Mr. Driscoll also reported the discovery by him of a previously unknown plan or map of Brookline in the Town Engineer's Office. The map divided the town into two sections of 2,284 acres each. There followed a general discussion about the present storing of old records and the urgent necessity of preserving them properly. Miss Butcher suggested that an index of Society publications be completed and that work on the old records of the town should be performed only by a professionally trained person. Mr. Vose and others suggested that this matter of the old records is properly the concern of the Society and that specific action should be taken as soon as possible. It was thought that the Selectmen might agree to share the cost of this work with the Society. Mr. Vose and Mr. Luquer will discuss with Mr. Caswell the possibility of his indexing the old papers of the Society at the Main Library. Miss Butcher was authorized to look into obtaining a qualified person to catalogue these old records. Mr. Driscoll suggested that a paper be written about the closing of the B & A Railroad's Highland Circuit Branch from an historical point of view.

At the Spring meeting on June 7th, Mr. Joseph Hudak, partner in Olmsted Associates, delivered in the Olmsted Office on Warren Street an address entitled "Some Aspects of the Life and Times of the Olmsteds."

On November 8th, at the Fall meeting, in the Main Library, Mrs. Elizabeth St. John Bruce, Head Hostess of the Harlow Old Fort House in Plymouth, told us of her experiences as a Hostess.

At a meeting of the Trustees in the Main Library on December 15th another discussion was held in regard to the cataloging of records and it was decided that Mr. Vose should contact Miss Butcher.

Legal documents pertaining to the will of Josephine H. Wilder, under which the Brookline Historical Society is a beneficiary, were reviewed. The President and the Clerk were authorized to sign the necessary documents and to submit them to Mr. Henry Hughes at the Brookline Trust Company. Mr. Bond had previously reviewed the papers from a legal angle and moved the authorizations. The policy in regard to new members was discussed and Mrs. Bridge offered to revise the application form to include the listing of the

applicant's sponsor. It was voted that Dr. Joseph Craven, sponsored by the Clerk, would be elected to membership at the next Annual Meeting and that the applications of Miss Dorothy H. Smith and Mrs. Margaret H. Smith would be accepted upon verification of their sponsorship by Miss Oxenham.

Future projects were mentioned, such as the writing of the histories of all the other Brooklines—Brookline, N. H., Maine, Pennsylvania, Vermont, etc. Mr. Packard expressed interest in Brookline, N. H. and Mr. Vose in Brookline, Vermont. Other projects talked of were the history of the "Point" section by Mr. Peter Mealey and the story of the old cars in the Larz Anderson Auto Museum. The Clerk reported a call from Mr. Emil Skop of the Brookline Taxpayers Association in regard to any interest we might have in the "Widow Harris" House on the Anderson Estate. The Selectmen might tear down this house but wish to get the Society's feeling before proceeding. Mrs. Bertram Little's advice was asked for.

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## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

### FIFTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING, JANUARY 18, 1959

The first piece of business in my report which is very brief: the plaque, which we will mount, locating the first town pound is in my pantry. I have talked to the man who is going to set it. It is not an easy thing to do and there have been several postponements. It will be in place by the time of the Spring meeting.

The only other piece of business is that Mrs. Little and I visited the Putterham Schoolhouse, where she took a couple of snapshots of the interior. The building, as you probably know, is about 30 x 16 and there is a woodshed off that and a piece of masonry, which town records call "a necessary", adjoins it. I have two pictures which I will circulate. The building is in good repair and the town is keeping an eye on it. I do not think we have any worries on that score.

We have 249 members at the moment and we are losing a few people every year. I think that, to stay in business, each of us should go out and get a new member. Later, I am going to appoint a Committee on Membership.

Miss Josephine Wilder's will gave us \$5,000.00 and there was a residuary bequest of \$1,333.00. I do not know if there is anyone we can thank for this but if there are any heirs I would like to do it.

DONALD K. PACKARD,  
*President*



**BROOKLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT**

Cash and Securities on hand January 1, 1959

Brookline Savings Bank .....	\$8,866.12	
U. S. Series K Bonds .....	2,000.00	
Brookline Trust Company .....	1,424.45	
		\$12,290.57

Receipts for 1959

Membership Dues .....	\$ 451.00	
Donations .....	10.50	
Sale of "History of Brookline" .....	2.00	
Sale of "Proceedings" .....	2.00	
Interest — U. S. Series K Bonds .....	55.20	
Interest — Brookline Savings Bank .....	272.43	
Interest — Brookline Federal Savings & Loan Ass'n. ( \$1,000 transferred from Checking Account ) .....	17.50	
		\$ 810.63
		\$13,101.20

Payments for 1959

Printing 1957-58 "Proceedings" .....	\$ 342.25	
Secretary's Expense .....	96.10	
Treasurer's Expense .....	6.71	
Recording and furnishing transcript of meetings ...	72.00	
Repairs and restoration of old furniture .....	233.57	
Chairs Rental .....	27.00	
Collations .....	34.43	
Installation of Bronze Tablet at former Town Pound site .....	15.00	
Insurance .....	7.80	
New England Council listing .....	2.00	
Bay State Historical Society Dues .....	4.00	
Speaker — Autumn 1959 Meeting .....	29.00	
Bank Charges .....	3.49	
		\$ 873.35

Cash and Securities on hand December 31, 1959

Brookline Savings Bank .....	\$9,193.75	
U. S. Series K Bonds .....	2,000.00	
Brookline Federal Savings & Loan Ass'n. .... ( transferred from Checking Account ) .....	1,017.50	
Brookline Trust Company .....	16.60	
		\$12,227.85
		\$13,101.20

Respectfully submitted,

J. FREDERICK NELSON,  
*Treasurer*

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ROOMS

ANNUAL MEETING, JANUARY 18, 1959

The Annual Meeting of the Society was held in the Devotion House on January 19, 1958. On Saturday, March 8, Mr. John Coolidge, Director of the Fogg Museum, brought to the house a group of 15 students who were interested in early American architecture. On March 15, the house was visited by the Field and Forest Club led by Miss Muriel Caswell. On the tenth of June, 4 grades from the Devotion School comprising about 115 pupils and 4 teachers were shown the house. Children from other public and from parochial schools in the town have also visited during the year. We have had people from Maine, Connecticut, Minnesota, Texas and California; also two students, one from Indore City, India, and one from Thailand.

A gift of a red army blanket was received from Miss Florence Collins. This had come from Miss Collins' grandmother, in Richmond, Maine, who had received it from a Mr. Harlow. It is understood to have been used both at Bunker Hill and during the Civil War.

Another gift was received from Mr. Sewall Cutler of Brookline which consisted of heirlooms of the Clark family. Included were two children's dresses, a small oil painting of an unidentified old house, two children's books,—a *New England Primer* and *Scripture Promises of 1832*, inscribed Lydia Clark—and a genealogical record book of Clark and allied families. The photographs and books have been deposited in the Public Library Historical Society Collection; the other articles, in the Devotion House.

The town has continued its structural upkeep of the Devotion House by painting the kitchen and bathroom, putting new paper on the back stairway walls, painting all downstairs floors pumpkin yellow and doing all necessary repairs on doors, windows and doorbells.

Respectfully submitted,

NINA FLETCHER LITTLE

*Chairman, Committee on Rooms*

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## PLANNING BROOKLINE'S FUTURE

by

JUSTIN GRAY, *Resident Planner*, with remarks by  
RUSSELL HASTINGS, *Chairman of the Planning Board*

RUSSELL HASTINGS: I believe that the Historical Society is as much interested in planning for Brookline's future as it is in preserving

the records and traditions of the past. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Gray's paper which you are to hear this afternoon marks the first time that the Society has turned its attention to the future.

I am sorry that I did not have time to explore the period immediately preceding the creation of the Planning Board in March, 1914, at which time the town also repealed the bylaw providing for activity on municipal improvement, which had some of the functions now resting in the Planning Board. Mr. Frederick L. Olmsted was the Chairman and Mr. Kilham a member.

The population of the town in 1915 was 34,490 and there were 5798 registered voters, as compared to 56,876 in 1955 and 31,651 voters in 1957.

The bylaw adopted at a special Town Meeting in December, 1913, provided that the duties of the Planning Board "shall be to make careful studies of the resources, possibilities and needs of the town particularly with respect to conditions which may be injurious to the public health, or otherwise injurious in and about rented dwellings, and to make plans for the development of the town, with special reference to proper housing of its people. It shall also be the duty of such Board to consider and advise upon municipal improvement in regards of which the advice of the Board at any time may be asked by any official or officials of the town, and such Board may also, upon its own initiative make to any official or officials of the town such recommendations in regard to municipal improvement as such Board may from time to time think proper and expedient."

Turning to the Second Annual Report for the year 1915, we find that it is fully illustrated with pictures showing what the Board considered examples of flagrant disregard on the part of apartment house builders "of the customary setbacks which have hitherto contained a margin of cheerful green, between the buildings and the sidewalks." Also, pictures of the approach to Brookline at the junction of Washington Street and Brookline Avenue are given, as well as a map of the area, with the statement that "in November, a circular was sent out requesting suggestions for the improvement of this easterly entrance to the town." The Report contains the draft of a letter to be sent to the Planning Boards of Boston, Newton, Needham and Dedham, requesting their cooperation in the establishment of radial metropolitan thoroughfares, both existing and proposed. It states that "at a later date a diagram indicating certain suggestions in regard to cross-town thoroughfares, will be submitted."

In the 1918 Report, some three years later, we find under the heading "Street Railways" the following statement, "Brookline like many other suburbs of Boston has suffered during the past year because of inadequate provision by the Boston Elevated Railway Company to provide sufficient accommodation for its passengers. Some relief for this congestion might possibly be obtained by electrifying

the Newton circuit of the Boston and Albany railroad and connecting it to the subway system of the Boston Elevated Railway." This was for the year 1918, and the Report was written just after the war. They mentioned war conditions and the reason why little had been done in the way of planning during it.

The 1919 Report again mentioned "the possibilities for improvement at the entrance to the town near the corner of Brookline Avenue and Washington Street" for which "a special appropriation of \$1,500 was made in 1917" and concludes by saying "the Board has felt that it was not justified in going to the expense of preparing plans and estimates for so radical a departure as a municipal housing enterprise in the absence of special instructions from the town, and all but \$150 of the special appropriation of \$1,500 therefore remains in the treasury." It was indeed a frugal Board, but I want to call attention to the fact that they early recognized a great need for doing something to arrest the causes of blight as well as to provide adequate and sightly streets for handling the rapidly growing automobile traffic.

Two years later, in 1922, in a special Report to the town on the proposed zoning bylaw, subsequently adopted by a special Town Meeting in May of that year, they said "that Brookline has remained so purely a resident's town, must be a source of wonder to anyone who stops to consider the development of neighboring territories. Whatever has been the cause of this fortunate result, it has certainly not been due to any public action by the town itself." The Report concludes: "to maintain property values already created, to protect those to be created, and to maintain the enviable reputation of Brookline as a resident community, the Planning Board is convinced that a zoning bylaw should immediately be adopted by the town."

JUSTIN GRAY<sup>1</sup>: I find myself discouraged, and possibly a little sad, at the remarks of Mr. Hastings. We are concerned with the future—with the future subdivisions, the breaking up of large land holdings into smaller lots for single family homes and other developments and we are not building the master group of the past. We are building the contemporary ranch-type houses, with a different facade in each one simply by changing the bricks into wood. We are concerned with the tax rate today; we are fighting rear-guard action. In order to maintain and enhance the residential character of the community, we have to think in terms of so many other things such as changing land uses of the Lowell Playground and recreation areas to other uses. I will try to discuss "What is Brookline today," statistically and in human terms.

First, almost in the words of the 1918 report, there are two main goals of the planning efforts today. One, essentially, is to retain and enhance Brookline's present excellent character as a residential com-

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<sup>1</sup>The following, taken from a tape recording, is a condensation of Mr. Gray's talk.

munity. The second point is to strengthen our tax base. One must be developed along with the other.

Since we are a residential community, our schools, our recreation areas, our streets, our commercial areas, the development of Coolidge Corner, the redevelopment of Brookline Village—all these things depend upon the residential environment that we choose to build.

Who wishes to live in the homes that are built in Brookline? The housing market for Brookline is, of course, the Boston Metropolitan area. Any single housing unit, any one of your homes located in Brookline, competes for tenants or owners with a unit of the same general character located at any given point within the Boston Metropolitan area. In an attempt to define this housing market, the Planning Board made a special analysis of all persons over 20 years of age who moved into Brookline in a three-year period, 1954, 1955 and 1956, and this involved tracing some 11,645 people who moved into our community in those three years. We wanted to find out who they were, what were their occupations, why they moved to Brookline, what they moved into in Brookline and what they moved from when they came here. In summary: two thirds of these 11,000 plus people who moved into Brookline came from the Boston Metropolitan area—over 50 per cent from Brighton and Back Bay and 30 per cent from Dorchester and Roxbury. In other words, the bulk of these people came from areas close to Brookline and, more significantly, they came from apartments to move into apartments.

What is the type of dwelling in which our 57,000 or 58,000 people live? We generally think of it as a single family town, but probably the most significant fact concerning Brookline's housing today is the existence and growth of large multiple family dwelling units. Of a total of 6,000 dwelling units in Brookline in 1959, 5,000 were in structures containing five or more dwelling units—apartment house living. I was stunned by these statistics. Single family housing has been slow in developing while the construction of privately financed large apartment units has exceeded the rate of growth of all housing in the whole Metropolitan area.

What kind of people live in our community? What type are their homes? Between 1900 and the end of World War II the town exploded in its population from 20,000 to 57,000. This is typical of the downtown metropolitan areas throughout the country. Since 1945, the number of people has remained virtually unchanged. But its composition, its age and family size has changed radically. In 1955, the 0 to 4 age group in our population comprised only 5 per cent of the total, while in the state it was 10 per cent and about 11 per cent in the nation. All the studies indicate that our number of dwelling units is increasing, but that the size of the family is decreasing. We also do not know why people have left town although we know quite a bit about who moved in, where they moved and why.

The Planning Board anticipates a continuation of the trend of

more dwelling units and fewer people per unit. They expect a population ranging from 60 to 63 thousand by 1980 but a decrease of about 300 elementary school children by that date. At present you have in your elementary schools about 450 more spaces than you have children and we anticipate that by 1980 there will be between 700 and 750 empty classroom spaces, obviously an invitation for some sort of change.

Mr. Hastings talked about zoning and stated, I think, that 1915 was the year of the first proposal.

MR. HASTINGS: They spoke about it then, but the first actual proposed zoning bylaw was in 1922.

MR. GRAY: Zoning is a very important problem today. One of the most significant problems is the legislation recently passed by the Commonwealth. The Supreme Court has upheld a decision which raises the question of whether or not Brookline, or any other Massachusetts community, will have any control through its zoning bylaws over the location and construction of buildings for educational or religious purposes. The zoning statute of our Commonwealth permits any town through a zoning bylaw to restrict the height, the number of stories, the density of population, the location of the building—the very thing that zoning does, provided that no ordinance or no bylaw such as ours will be valid which prohibits or limits the use of land for any church or any educational purpose. We want educational institutions in our residential districts, but the laws now indicate that all educational and religious institutions are exempt from all zoning regulations. This means that if you have a large single family home and there is another one next door, an institution might buy the house next to you. It does not have to be Harvard or Boston University; it could be a beauty academy, a dancing school, a business school, and completely exempt from all the zoning provisions you are required to adhere to. The Planning Board believes that a zoning law should not prohibit such use but that educational institutions should be regulated.

Now, in Brookline we have a lovely single family residential area, an auspicious area, Mason Square, Longwood Square, in close proximity to Boston University. The latter is in an area in which it is probably difficult to build a pleasant academic environment. They obviously must expand in terms of their needs. We have discussed this with the University which will probably double their enrollment in the next ten years. They will have to move in two directions, one down Bay State Road and the other in the direction of Precinct 1, where there are large single family homes. Planners in Boston and Cambridge are already referring to Boston University as “Brookline University”. Obviously, there is here a considerable threat to our residential environment.

Another threat to this area is its close proximity to downtown Boston. In 1918, there was surprise expressed that we were able to

maintain such a lovely residential environment. In 1958, this is even more surprising. Obviously, the pressures on certain areas turn in the direction of multiple family uses. The Planning Board is trying to hold the line. One of the problems is that these large single family homes are too expensive and too large for our single family living.

Mr. Hastings spoke of the Planning Board's concern in 1915 with the traffic problem. I do not believe that today there is any one more destructive element in the terms of our residential community than the automobile. The Planning Board feels that a major problem is the cars and trucks, with origins and destination outside of Brookline, that are forced to use many of our town's residential streets. I doubt if people crossing through our residential streets want to use Powell and Amory Streets in order to get to Cottage Farm Bridge, or to use Lee Street. About 6,000 cars a day go on Warren Street between Lee and Cottage. Intolerable! 18,000 cars use Chestnut Hill Avenue and 6,000 cars a day use Dean Road.

MR. HASTINGS: Cypress Street, 12,500 cars a day; Route 9, 50,000.

MR. GRAY: This infiltration of traffic is the single most serious threat to the existing and future character of Brookline as a residential community. Make Route 9 work. Improve the Village. Make through traffic go through. And then, only then, divert all traffic off Walnut Street. Cars come down Heath Street, then go way around Warren Street, up Walnut, behind the firehouse and by way of Roxbury and West Roxbury just to avoid the bottleneck. Our streets are being used by traffic that does not belong. We must divert them off these streets and channel them on to regular well-designed streets after which we can stop them on the others. If necessary, build a park in the middle of the street or a concrete post—very inexpensive—but we have to make the other streets work. This is one of the reasons why the Planning Board feels that the proposed Inner Belt Expressway is so meaningful. It can be a major means of keeping the traffic in one certain channel outside of our residential streets, and then we can afford to make our other streets residential.

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## SOME ASPECTS OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE OLMSTEDS

by

JOSEPH HUDAK, *Partner*

*Olmsted Brothers — now Olmsted Associates*

The other evening I read a recent speech by a landscape architect from St. Louis, warning of the foreseeable and irreplaceable loss which would come from highway and industrial encroachment upon developed parks and open spaces. The author went on to analyze

our need for parks today and made the statement that our basic purpose and need for the development and use of parks had not altered from what Frederick Law Olmsted, Senior, had expressed a hundred years ago. He further stated that Twentieth Century man is still indebted to the amazing vision outlined so ably by Olmsted's principles and ideas concerning park development. This speech, in its small way, marked the merit of the man so often called "The Father of Landscape Architecture in America". Today we shall explore some aspects of his life and times as well as those of his equally illustrious son, Frederick, Junior, and the able members of the firm.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Senior, was born in Hartford in 1822, the son of Charlotte Law and John Olmsted, a prosperous merchant of the city. He was tutored privately, spending many years in study with various ministers in New England. At 14 he contracted a virulent poisoning from sumac which left him partially blinded for a time. His eyes remained weak, however, and were the cause of his having to forego formal college study. From 1837 to 1847 he studied surveying, civil engineering, and other technical subjects under various instructors and as a special student at Yale—his only brother, John, was also attending at the time—and he became an honorary member of the Class of 1847. He was then 25.

From 1847 to 1857 he practiced agriculture and horticulture on his own farms. The last of these was located on Staten Island. He seemed always to have had an interest in scenery and natural landscape, and he travelled extensively both here and abroad with his family and by himself. His two books, "A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States" and "A Journey in the Back Country in the Year 1854" are considered—now as then—literate and valuable essays of the Southern temperament prior to the Civil War. (These books were just recently re-published and received favorable reviews).

Although not much is known with assurance about the instances of their association, Olmsted corresponded with Andrew Jackson Downing, the most prominent American horticulturist of the time; and through Downing met Calvert Vaux, a young English architect brought from London by Downing to his New York office. The association of Vaux and Olmsted was probably slight at first; it enlarged greatly within a decade.

By 1853, New York City had been authorized by the State Legislature to acquire a central site for a large park. This selection became what is known today as Central Park. Downing was an advocate for the choice as was William Cullen Bryant. Olmsted, now 35, was finishing the manuscript for "Journey in the Back Country" at a seaside resort when a newly-created Commission of Central Park paid him a visit to urge him to accept the position of Superintendent of the Park, acting as executive officer to the Engineer with respect to the labor force of 500 used in the initial clearing of the site. (This later increased in the 1860's to some 2500 men). Olmsted agreed to



try and went immediately to New York to seek advice and support from his friends there. His application carried the endorsement of Washington Irving and Peter Cooper; and Professor Asa Gray of the Arnold Arboretum wrote an enthusiastic endorsement as well. He was selected at the first subsequent meeting of the Park Board.

In 1857, the Commissioners announced a competition for the total design of the Park. Vaux asked Olmsted to collaborate on a design but Olmsted declined, saying it would show discourtesy to his superior, the Park Engineer, whose own plan had been set aside by the Commission. However, when the Engineer showed indifference to Olmsted's entering, he accepted Vaux's offer. His superintendency left him little time for the design work, and the completed submission was delivered only on the last day. Thirty-five entries were submitted, and after several weeks of deliberation the Commissioners voted to award the first prize of \$2,000 to the Olmsted-Vaux plan called "Greensward".

In 1859, Olmsted married Mary Cleveland (Perkins) Olmsted, widow of his brother John and became step-father to her three children. A son of his own died shortly after birth. In 1861 his daughter, Marion, was born; in 1870, Frederick Junior. The family continued to live in the New York City area, although Mr. Olmsted was now acting as consultant to many new park commissions in various parts of the country, from Brooklyn to San Francisco.

In 1872 the partnership of Olmsted and Vaux was dissolved for reasons of mutual convenience. Olmsted continued with his park interests, and in 1875 began the correspondence with the Boston Park Commission that developed within a year into discussion of design proposals for the Charles River Embankment, the Back Bay, Jamaica Pond, and the West Roxbury parks. By 1878 he was working actively with his friends, Professors Gray and Sargent, on the development of the Arnold Arboretum plans and the intricate agreement by which Harvard University would retain the horticultural program and the City of Boston provide and maintain the facilities. That year, too, the Boston Park Commission agreed to his developing what was then called the "Back Bay Park".

H. H. Richardson, while working on Trinity Church, had brought his family to live in the "Jamaica Planter's House" on Cottage Street in Brookline, and while visiting him Olmsted crystallized his idea of following suit. Olmsted had been strongly attracted to the Boylston Farmhouse on the corner of Warren and Dudley Streets and to the remnant of the farmland (several acres) still attached to it. The area had a country atmosphere—barnyard animals were more the rule than the exception—and yet it was only an hour's carriage drive to his work in Boston. It was an inducement to a man who had enjoyed the satisfactions of farming in his youth.

The land was then owned by the Misses Clark of the Boylston

family, but they were unwilling to sell—and depart from—this ancestral property, although they were in some financial difficulty. They were induced to sell, however, when Mr. Olmsted offered to build them a small cottage on the property and to give them a life-lease without rental. He took possession in the spring of 1883—at the age of 61—and began making repairs and minor alterations to the house and grounds, including the conversion of the northeast ground-floor room into an office. Later, additional units of office space were added in rambling structures on various levels—there are many flights of stairs throughout the office—because he insisted on carefully adjusting the buildings to the topography and thereby preserving intact certain picturesque features of rock outcroppings and grade changes which had attracted him to the land in the first place.

Now began the great period of the development of the Boston Park System which fully occupied him with a decade of intense concentration. This work was shared with his stepson, John,—by this time a full partner of the firm—with Henry Sargent Codman, and with Charles Eliot, son of the President of Harvard. Still, he found time to enter into diverse landscape architectural work on the Brookline area. He contributed ideas to the Boston & Albany Railroad stations development; laid out Aspinwall Avenue; engineered drainage solutions for The Country Club; created a Chestnut Hill subdivision; made revisions to Harvard Street, Commonwealth Avenue and to Beacon Street; developed Corey Hill; drew plans for the Storrow place on High Street; the Lee estate on Dudley; and for R. H. White's residence in Chestnut Hill. He was active for years in the development of the Philbrick estate as well as the Schlesinger home on Warren Street. He drew several plans for parkways at the south end of Brookline, was instrumental in the choice of the police station location and developed the Brookline section of the Muddy River improvement. He wrote innumerable reports about the influence of proposed and existing developments upon the future welfare of the town.

Mr. Olmsted took the greatest interest in the naturalistic style of planting. He may fairly be said to have been the originator in America of the extensive use of shrubbery borders and masses as a main feature of landscape planting instead of planting individual shrubs as mere decoration.

His far-flung activities took him constantly on long rail journeys across the country to review office commissions in almost every major city. For example, he continued an active involvement with the development of the national Capitol grounds, Amherst College, Buffalo subdivisions and parks, Stanford University, "Riverside" subdivision in Chicago, Johns Hopkins University, Fairmount Park in Philadelphia, Riverside Drive and Park in New York, Mount Royal Park in Montreal, and countless other major works. He was instrumental in persuading members of Congress to formulate a national park program.

Toward the last years of his life he devoted his interest and efforts to two main projects, both of tremendous dimension and influence in the American scene: the Biltmore estate of the Vanderbilts in Asheville, North Carolina; and the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. All other activities were turned over to his partners while he concentrated his energies toward the completion of this important work, for Biltmore comprised some 10,000 acres for the estate alone, while the developed timberland holdings added an additional 100,000 acres.

He achieved his goal of completion with the Fair, but his health failed him in 1895 and Biltmore was left to be finished by his son, Frederick Junior, who had the exceptional opportunity for plant study with the great collection of foreign and native material used on the grounds.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Senior, retired from the firm soon thereafter, and in 1903—at the age of 81—died in Waverly, Massachusetts. He was mourned by newspaper editorials throughout the world.

Prior to Senior's death the firm name had become Olmsted Brothers, having passed through at least four changes of title since the original collaboration of Olmsted and Vaux. John and Frederick Junior were the only partners at the time of their father's death, however, since both Codman and Eliot had succumbed previously. The brothers continued the work begun by Olmsted Senior in the development of Brookline, working out programs for the widening of Boylston Street, developing a prominent main entrance to the Town in the vicinity of the fire station at High Street, and the Village Square improvement. Their private clients included Colonel Hopkins of Aspinwall Hill; G. W. Armstrong on Beacon Street; and Larz Anderson, whose estate just recently has been converted into a Town park aided by the firm's redevelopment program. Frederick Junior was a member of the Brookline Planning Board from its inception in 1914 until his resignation in 1938. I think we can fairly conclude that Brookline has received and appreciated the influence of the Olmsteds in assisting Brookline to become one of the most thoughtfully developed towns in the East.

In 1899 John and Frederick Junior helped create the American Society of Landscape Architects, the national professional society which now numbers over 1,500 members throughout the country. At President Eliot's request Frederick, Junior, initiated the first courses ever given anywhere in the profession of Landscape Architecture. This was at Harvard in 1901; he continued his association with it as the Charles Eliot professor until 1914. He is generally credited with having brought into being that special aspect of design known today as city planning, and he became President of the American City Planning Institute as well as a corresponding member of the British Town Planning Institute. For his work in the

planning aspects of Washington, D. C., the American Academy of Arts and Letters has called him "the longest continuing designing influence of any single individual upon the growth of the Federal city". In 1931 the American Institute of Architects awarded him their Fine Arts Medal, partially in tribute for his Washington activities. He spent more than twenty years there as a consultant working with the National Commission of Fine Arts in the development of the White House grounds, the Lincoln Memorial, the Arlington Memorial Bridge, the Jefferson Memorial, the Washington Mall, the Mellon Art Gallery, the Potomac Park System, and the Rock Creek Parkway. As a member of the National Committee of Fine Arts, he went to the Isthmus in 1914 with Daniel Burnham and Daniel Chester French, on the request of Col. Goethals, to advise on the development of permanent town sites in the Panama Canal Zone, on the surroundings of locks and on other matters affecting the appearance of the Canal. The Commission's report on this visit was written by Frederick Olmsted, Junior.

In the Boston metropolitan area he provided schemes for the development of the Revere Beach Parkway with its attendant bathing facilities and promenades; the improvement of sections of Nahant Beach for public bathing; the construction of a shore road for Lynn, for Quincy, and for the Strandway in South Boston; the conversion of the Charles River tidal estuary from Boston to Watertown, into a constant-level fresh water stream and lake; the development of both the Mystic River Parkway and the Alewife Brook Parkway; and the shore treatment—some 11 miles in length—of the Spot Pond Reservoir.

Throughout the "Golden Twenties" he and his partners helped create a large number of elaborate gardens for private clients, especially those in the Long Island and Newport areas. One of his most ambitious subdivision undertakings was the complete layout of Palos Verdes, California, on the Pacific Ocean: 16,000 acres of intensive development which coordinated the architectural, the engineering, and the landscape plans under the supervision of the firm. This occupied most of his time on the site for eight consecutive years. The problem was difficult for he was requested to develop a fine community on the hillsides, to prevent the intrusion of sordid and incongruous commonplace developments, to design and apportion the land for many kinds of required uses, and to see the work under way. The zoning regulations created for this work were used as a model for other communities for many years. Similar ventures include: Forest Hills, Long Island; Roland Park in Baltimore; the Mountain Lake Club in Florida; and the Mid-Ocean Club in Bermuda. Each of these was an example of the high esteem for the landscape architect's role as chief designer of land usage. These developments are still considered choice living areas today.

The firm's activities include the construction of Audubon Park

and Zoo in New Orleans; some 3,300 acres of parkways and parks for Essex County, New Jersey; the lakefront Jackson Park in Chicago; and Fort Tryon Park in New York where The Cloisters Museum is located. Of Fort Tryon, the donor, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., said: "This is your masterpiece, just as Central Park was for your father."

Mr. Olmsted was always particularly interested in the conservation of natural resources and fought vigorously against the destruction and exploitation of wilderness areas and national park holdings, as well as infringements on municipal parks. He made many investigatory trips to park sites, and he is known to have complained that he spent more time in railway sleeping cars than not. He crystallized the National Park idea by framing the park formula in the Act that was passed by Congress in 1916 establishing the National Park Service. He said, in part ". . . to conserve the scenery and national and historic objects in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

John Olmsted died in 1920, but the Olmsted Brothers firm name was retained by Frederick, Junior, and a coalition of partners through the past years. Mr. Olmsted retired from active practice in 1950 to devote his efforts to the Save-the-Redwoods League, an undertaking he considered his most important venture. He moved to Palo Alto, California, shortly thereafter, and as a tribute to his work a group of friends purchased a 40-acre grove of Sequoias and dedicated it to him as the Frederick Law Olmsted Redwood Grove. He died in December, 1957, in California.

There are many facets of these careers which I have not covered today—not from neglect—but because the impressive list is too long and detailed to pursue at this time. Both men devoted their lives to the improvement of mankind; Brookline can well be proud of its adopted sons.

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FOOTNOTE: In 1963, the Department of the Interior announced that the Warren Street home of Frederick Law Olmsted had been designated a National Historic Landmark.

## EXPERIENCES AS A HOSTESS

by

ELIZABETH ST. JOHN BRUCE

Mrs. Bruce, Head Hostess of the Harlow Old Fort House (1677) in Plymouth, attired in Pilgrim dress, talked informally of her experiences in her position. She illustrated her talk with samples of her work, such as weaving and candle-making, and spiced her address with humorous anecdotes gleaned from her contacts with visitors from all over the United States and from several foreign countries.