

A TREE GROWS IN BROOKLYN

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CHICAGO LITERARY CLUB

BY

WILLIAM GOODRICH JONES

MARCH 18, 2019

“There's a tree that grows in Brooklyn. Some people call it the Tree of Heaven. No matter where its seed falls, it makes a tree which struggles to reach the sky. It grows in boarded up lots and out of neglected rubbish heaps. It grows up out of cellar gratings. It is the only tree that grows out of cement. It grows lushly...survives without sun, water, and seemingly earth. It would be considered beautiful except that there are too many of it.”

Betty Smith: A Tree Grows in Brooklyn. (1945)

IN THE BEGINNING

About 450 million years ago, there was not a lot that we would recognize as North America. The building of the east coast began with the creation of the first great mountain ranges with what is called the Taconic Orogeny when an island arc joined the continent and began the first great period of mountain building. Huge mountains were raised up and eroded down several times, and all that remains today is the Appalachian range that extends from Canada and Eastern New England to the Piedmont. For the geologically inclined the modern evidence of the collision between the island arc and the continent is known as Cameron's Line, passing through southern New York, the East

River, across the Bronx, beneath Staten Island and southward into New Jersey.

“In the history of the earth, there have been five major ice ages. The last ice age in North America began 2.6 million years ago and covered North America to a depth of 2 miles. The highest skyscrapers in Manhattan would have been covered. About 18,000 years ago the ice began to melt. The melted ice moved south from Canada through Lake Champlain and the Hudson River Gorge. The retreating ice left mounds of rubble that extended across the Northern United States. Giant boulders and other evidence of glaciation can still be seen in Manhattan including Central Park as well as mounds of rubble in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. Much of the rubble forming glacial till was not suitable for building construction, but eventually this neglected land became parks, cemeteries, golf courses, and eventually some of the most attractive neighborhoods.”

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

The great geological beauty and stunning vistas of upstate New York inspired painters like Henry Cole, Frederick Church, and members of the Hudson River School. Into this environment in Newburgh, New York, Andrew Jackson Downing was born, the son of a nurseryman and wheelwright. Downing's father died when he was 7. He worked in his father's nursery and, hiking in the striking and beautiful scenery along the Hudson River, he developed an interest in plants and their effective grouping in the landscape.

Downing had a strong personality -- haughty, melancholic, and self-controlled, in no way revealing what he perceived as his humble origins. He smiled infrequently; he never laughed. By the 1830s he began writing about gardening and published his first book. Other books and articles followed. He was the first person to argue for a New York park, a “central park.” His pronouncements were taken as gospel, and he became in

contemporary terms, “a celebrity.” In 1850 Downing traveled to Europe, visiting famous gardens and estates, On his return, Downing wrote that, “finding a clever young architect in London, I persuaded him to come out with me and work at architecture and landscape gardening with me.” That young architect was 26-year old Calvert Vaux.

Vaux was a superb draftsman and talented artist. He had a knowledge of English and European parks, designed in the reviving style of English Gothic. He loved the countryside and could make appealing sketches of rural scenery. But, his career was going nowhere. He supported himself by providing the lettering on maps, aided by an ability to write backwards.

Shortly after Downing's European trip, he invited Vaux to become a partner. He quickly accepted. He joined Downing in his studio near Newburgh. Two years later they were joined by an acquaintance of Vaux, Englishman Frederick Clarke Withers. Withers was, like Vaux, an architect. Business was good and the Downing/Vaux partnership acquired many large commissions in their architectural and landscape design business. Also in this year a young Harvard graduate, Clarence Cook, joined the team.

Then, on July 28th, 1852, Downing tragically drowned in a steamer accident on the Hudson near Yonkers. Vaux and Withers continued the practice in Newburgh for 4 more years. During that time, Vaux married the Julia McEntee, the sister of Hudson River School artist Jervis McEntee.. They had a son whom Vaux name Downing in honor of his friend and partner. New York was increasingly the source of the firm's commissions, and he and Withers established their practice there in 1856.

As New York's population continued to increase, there was more and more interest in the

creation of a public park that would compare with some of the great European parks. In 1844 William Cullen Bryant, newspaperman and poet, encouraged the development of the kind of park that, instead being the domain of kings and queens, would be open all classes of society and would be reflective of the democratic ideals of the country. He favored a park known as Jones's Wood. Although it was an appealing location, the proposal failed.

New York's board of aldermen created a special committee to consider alternate sites. Attention was then focused on a long, thin rectangle of 770 acres that at least was central, bounded on east and west by 5th avenue and 8th, 59th street on the south, and 89th street on the north. It was not a very promising location. The long, rectangular shape, was considered too constraining for a successful design. Outcroppings of rock jutted through the landscape, and there were two reservoirs that occupied the center of the rectangle. There were small communities that would have to be displaced. The site also contained small industries and businesses: leather dressers and matchmakers, livestock, hogs, cattle. All would have to go.

A topographical engineer for the State of New Jersey, Gilbert Ludovicus Viele began visiting the site. Viele was a West Point Graduate and Mexican War veteran, and during his work in New Jersey, he had drawn up a plan for the proposed park. The site was approved, and the dwellers and their homes and establishments removed at great expense. Downing would have been the logical person to head the new commission. A park commission appointed by the mayor of New York had just two members of an anticipated 11. Viele's plan was economical, pragmatic, and naturalistic. Mayor Wood's 2 commissioners approved Viele's plan. Five months later, a state-appointed board of 11 members tabled the plan, but retaining Viele as chief engineer, charging him only to complete the topographical survey.

The board began a search for a park superintendent, someone to undertake clearing land for the proposed park. It was rough work, requiring the oversight of large numbers of laborers to clear brush and smash stones. Through a chance encounter at a New Jersey inn, board member Charles Elliott met Frederick Law Olmsted. Olmsted badly needed money and a job, and Elliott thought that he might be the person the board was looking for. Olmsted was the author of *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England*, and was known in intellectual circles in the city. Elliott encourage him to apply. Olmsted responded immediately, submitting his own application and a letter signed by 200 acquaintances, including Washington Irving.

Olmsted's work history was not something to encourage the board. His application included a note describing his record managing a team of laborers, although he had never overseen more than 10-13 laborers at a farm his father had bought for him. Always financially dependent on his father, Olmsted had worked in a dry goods store, had a year at sea, had undertaken to become a gentlemen farmer, had an unconventional, unstructured education, and for 2 years had been editor of Putnam's magazine. On the other hand, he had traveled, had seen and been impressed by Joseph Paxton's public park Birkenhead, and clearly had considerable confidence in his abilities. Before the Civil War, he had toured the American South and sent dispatches to New York newspapers that eventually became books. He was hired at a salary of \$1500 a year, working for chief superintendent Egbert Ludovicus Viele.

By this time, Calvert Vaux, age 33, had built a flourishing practice in the city. He had strong ties to the architectural community and had good connections with the board members. Vaux critiqued Viele's plan as “lacking artistic conception” and without a central idea. He also had questions about the accuracy of Viele's survey. Vaux began

lobbying for a design competition, a practice common in England. The reconstituted board of commissioners reconsidered and decided in favor of a competition. The board set up requirements for the submission of proposals. Mandatory were four transverse roads cross the park. Designs were to be submitted at a scale of 100 feet to the inch that translated to a layout of 10 feet by 2 feet. First prize was \$2000. Every contestant was furnished with photographs taken from different points on the site. The deadline for proposals was March 31, 1858.

Vaux considered himself an artist and may have doubted that he could see through such a project on his own. He then approached Olmsted, age 35, and invited him to join in submitting a proposal. The two had met briefly when Olmsted visited Downing in 1850. Although Vaux was familiar with Olmsted's book, it is likely that Vaux found that Olmsted's intimate knowledge of the park's terrain and of the flaws in Viele's survey persuasive in his decision to make the offer. Olmsted hesitated. Joining Vaux would pit him against his boss. Olmsted consulted Viele who “merely shrugged.” Thus was begun a legendary association.

Vaux continued his architectural practice; Olmsted continued to supervise the site's clearing. In Olmsted Vaux saw someone who shared his social, democratic ideas, and who had the temperament to see the project through to completion. Olmsted saw Vaux as Downing's “chosen disciple” and the artist who could successfully complete the design. Vaux had had extensive experience in the design of rural residences and he knew how to place them advantageously on their sites.

At night the two rode on horseback through the site, then returned to Vaux's home to begin work. Several small tables had been pushed together so that they could lay out the 10-foot plan. They had assistance from friends in sketching in trees, lots of trees.

During this time, they decided to include drawings and watercolors to accompany the grim photographs of the site provided for the contestants. These would better illustrate how the park would look when completed. They called their submission “The Greensward Plan,” “Greensward” being an English expression meaning an “unbroken swath of land.” There were 33 official entries. The plan was not received by the board until the morning of April 1. They had technically missed the deadline, without penalty. Of the official entries, only 3 survive in their entirety. Of the remaining 30, only verbal descriptions survive. Most submissions recognized the constraints of the site. Several recommended that the park boundary should be extended from 106th street to 110th in order to include the high point of the northwest rock ridge. (This was accomplished in 1863). No other submission addressed the issue of the mandated 4 transverse roads, ones that would fragment the park landscape with traffic crossing at grade level. The stunning and brilliant solution provided in the Greensward plan was that these roads be submerged below grade. With proper hedging, screening, landscaped overpasses, and bridges, the rural feel of the park could be preserved without distracting park goers.

The commissioners announced their decision on April 28, 1858. They gave the Greensward Plan first prize. The vote was not unanimous with different proposals being favored by different commissioners. In the end they chose the plan whose design and whose designers they felt most comfortable with: artistically, politically, and socially. Also the plan was the most professional with its beautifully drawn layout and its accompanying “before and after” representations of the landscape. Although the guidelines for proposals included prescriptions for what should be included, the Greensward plan ignored those features that the two planners found inconvenient. Olmsted and Vaux shared the \$2000 prize. Shortly thereafter, Olmsted was named architect-in-chief and hired at a salary of \$2,500 a year. Vaux was hired as his assistant at the rate of \$5 per day! Vaux was the architect, not Olmsted. Thus began the

effacement of Vaux and a source of conflict that would continue throughout the years of their association.

No sooner had the prize been awarded than two prominent New Yorkers and members of the board came forward with different ideas about how the plan should be modified: Robert Dillon, a New York politician, and August Belmont, the wealthy American Representative of the Rothschild banking empire. The pair had 17 separate suggestions, including the scrapping of the sunken transverse roads on the grounds that they were likely to fill up with snow and the adding of more equestrian paths. Belmont, an avid horseman particularly wanted wider paths for carriages and riders. Olmsted defended the Greensward plan by enlisting his powerful journalist friends. Powerful as Dillon and Belmont were, Olmsted and Vaux resisted and obtained the backing of the board. Of significance, however, is that Belmont's call for separation of the previously parallel paths for carriages, horseback riders, and pedestrians was reasonable. The pair responded, creating separate paths, each winding independently through the park, such that travelers on the various paths would not interfere with each other. They introduced more than 30 bridges to carry the various routes over and under each other. Vaux designed the bridges, some of stone, some of cast iron, and some of wood. These two features of the Greensward Plan, the separate paths and the sunken roads, were the greatest of their design solutions.

The park site naturally divided itself into two parts with the reservoirs taking up a large percentage of that part of the park. The planners would suggest minimal alternation to the northern terrain. The lower portion of the park had mixed character. It's only significant feature was Vista Rock, a "long rocky and wooded hill-side south of the old reservoir." Several proposals suggested that it should be the logical focal point in the lower park. Otherwise the planners were free place whatever they pleased onto the

faceless landscape.

After years of delay, deliberation, the spending of millions, and the clearing of the land, it was time to fulfill the promise of the Greensward Plan. Olmsted hired another 1000 workers. Underneath the park lay bedrock, Manhattan schist. This lay just a few feet beneath a layer of dirt. Two hundred fifty tons gunpowder was used. Rock had to be blasted free for the transverse roads, including one under Vista Rock. Trenches were dug to ensure proper drainage; tiles and clay pipes were laid. Olmsted later said that 10 million one-horse cartloads were filled. Almost none of this rubble was removed from the site, but was redistributed to create hillocks and meadows. The quality of the soil was so poor for growing things that tons of topsoil was transported from New Jersey to create hillocks and gardens. Olmsted and Vaux developed their working relationship, Vaux, as the trained architect took responsibility for the design of bridges and archways and buildings. Olmsted saw himself as a super-manager, directing crews, and learning how to create some of the park's spectacular meadows. One his ideas was based on the shape of an hourglass. Visitors on foot would be drawn to a narrowing landscaped middle, then find a new view before them as the hourglass widened out. It was plan that he would use repeatedly and successfully.

In the lower half of the park at 59th Street, the Plan provided for curving paths to lead visitors quickly into the park. In order to emphasize the importance of Vista Rock, Vaux and Olmsted proposed a grand promenade, 60 feet wide and quarter mile long, later called the Mall. American Elms lined the promenade, leading to a feature Vaux claimed as his own idea, the Terrace. It was on two levels, featuring an arcade and two wide staircases decorated with imaginative relief sculptures that drew visitors to a lower level and opening to a plaza. A centerpiece of the plaza was a large fountain. Beyond the plaza would lie a lake. Because of its decorative components, abundant use of Minton

tiles and imaginative stone reliefs, the Terrace became the most expensive and most impressive construction in the park. Enhancing the visibility of Vista Rock was the Belvedere. This neo-Gothic structure was completed in 1871 and ranks as one of Vaux's greatest contributions and provides commanding views of the surrounding area. The board then authorized a bridge across the lake to facilitate access to another park feature, the Ramble. The result was Vaux's graceful cast and wrought iron bow bridge.

The Lake was the first feature to be opened in the Park. It began as a low-lying piece of swampy ground. Olmsted hired a drainage specialist to design how the system of filling and draining the lake could be managed. The Lake was to be used as a skating rink in the winter, and a system of raising and lowering the water level was devised. The Lake would be 7 feet deep in summers for boaters, 4 feet, in winter for skaters. Steps, submerged and not visible in summer, would permit skaters to descend for skating in winter. It was hugely popular.

The summer 1859 was a period of intense construction. Olmsted doubled the work force to 3600, and during it a second park feature was opened for use, the Ramble. It lay between the Lake and Vista Rock. The Ramble had been created to disguise a bald hillside leading up to the embankment of the old Croton reservoir. It was a wild garden with pathways that crossed and recrossed so often that wanderers could become lost. It contained a cave, revealed when the work of clearing was underway. The Lake was extended so that boaters could row up to an underground walkway, climb a staircase carved into the rock, or to pass through and out to a secret opening. Visitors loved the Ramble and thronged to it by the thousands. Where else in the city could city residents find a piece of the countryside so easily accessible? Where else could the park so clearly demonstrate its achievement as a democratic institution? Reviews were overwhelmingly positive. When Horace Greeley visited the park, he said, "Well, they

have let it alone a good deal more than I thought they would.”

However, the construction costs for the park had doubled the original \$1.5 million budget, although there was never any possibility that the park could be constructed within that limit. The commissioners were growing uncomfortable. The final cost might be \$8 million. Where was all that money going? In fact, Olmsted and Vaux had underestimated the labor costs of grading, draining, and road construction. Olmsted had begun to have trouble with individual members of the commission, and he couldn't account for some of the park expenses. Exhausted, he went to Saratoga Springs for a short vacation, and on his return wrote to his father that he was “thoroughly worn out, used up, fatigued beyond recovery.” The commissioners advanced \$500 in September 1859 for Olmsted to go to abroad and “employ the time examining examining European parks.”

It was time for a change. First as treasurer, then as president, commissioner Andrew Green was appointed park controller, preempting Olmsted's duties as “architect-in-chief.” Green had strongly supported the Greensward Plan, and he had become a frequent visitor to the Olmsted household, although the relationship had always been uneasy. He had strong standards of economy. In Olmsted's absence, he cut wages, laid off engineers, foremen, and assistants. Nonetheless, he was determined to complete plantings and open the drives before winter. In spite of protests, money was appropriated to complete the work. Olmsted returned from Europe. He resumed his duties, but there was no bill too small to escape scrutiny by Green. Then, in August 1860 Olmsted's leg was shattered in a carriage accident. He would walk with a limp for the rest of life.

Green again took charge of day-to-day operations. By December 1860 construction in

the lower park was substantially complete. In January 1861, a senate committee reported that the board's administration of the park was a “triumphant success.” In the same month Olmsted submitted a long letter of resignation as “architect-in-chief,” but neither Green nor the board, could afford to let him resign. After all, the senate investigating committee had stated that Central Park “was the best managed public work in the country,” just as the board was asking for new appropriations. In June 1861 appropriations were approved, and Green relieved Olmsted of almost all managerial duties.

Olmsted and Vaux resigned their positions with the Central Park commissioners in 1863. With the growing popularity of the park as a site where wealthy New Yorkers could display their wealth, Richard Morris Hunt proposed that large, monumental gates be placed at various points near the entrances to the park. The commissioners directed Green to begin their construction. Vaux reopened contact with the Commission, and, mobilizing his contacts with the press argued that such gates, imperial in style, were contrary to the pastoral, democratic theme emphasized by the Greensward Plan.

A challenge to the ideals of the Greensward Plan that Vaux and Olmsted could not control was the placement of monuments and statues commemorating the achievement of people and groups. Even Vaux's Terrace proposal included 26 statues of leading Americans, but it fell victim to cost overruns. In this respect, the sentiments of the park designers were defeated. A struggle over placement of such memorials went uncontrolled until the end of the century.

With the onset of the Civil War, Olmsted left New York to assume management of the United States Sanitary District, a battlefield-relief group and a precursor of the Red Cross. It was demanding work. By August 1862 Olmsted fell ill with headaches,

jaundice, and a skin condition. He again sought relief in Saratoga Springs, then returned briefly to New York. Vaux had pneumonia, had hallucinations, and often had to be restrained. Andrew Green had tried to visit, but Vaux ordered him to leave. Vaux and Olmsted had a financial agreement that provided the annual proceeds from their work in the park with Vaux taking \$2500 and Olmsted \$2000. Olmsted reduced his share to \$1200, borrowing \$300 additional to help Vaux and his family.

Olmsted began to have difficulties with the Sanitary Commission Board. He decided to move on. In 1864 Olmsted was offered a job as manager of the Mariposa Estate in the California gold country. From it John Fremont, the first Republican to be nominated by the new party for president, had made and lost millions, before the company being taken over by new owners. Olmsted went to California by way of steamer, crossing the Panama Isthmus by rail, then continuing by ship. He was fascinated by the variety and range of the foliage that he saw. Continuing his journey, he urged the park's Viennese gardener, Ignaz Pilat, by letter to experiment with plants that would convey some sense of the tropical scenery. Pilat complied, but without much success. Olmsted's family followed him to California, but it turned out not to be a profitable venture, and by 1865, Olmsted's services were no longer needed. Calvert Vaux had been looking for new opportunities, and he now was invited to submit a proposal for a park in Brooklyn, Prospect Park. And the Central Park board had requested that he and Olmsted return as "landscape architects," now a new and lasting expression for their work. Vaux begged Olmsted to return to New York. He used the possibility of his partner's engaging in the design and construction of a park in Brooklyn as enticement. Olmsted agreed. But it would be Olmsted, Vaux & Company, not Vaux and Olmsted.

In Brooklyn, James Stranahan, a railroad contractor and building, had hope that a park to rival Central Park could be constructed, partly to induce wealthy residents to remain in

the growing city. In April 1859 the state legislature authorized funding. Vaux submitted a proposal, but then returned to service. Stranahan asked Vaux for advice which resulted in a proposal to sell some of the land and purchase another tract. Based on Vaux's recommendation, land was acquired and permitted the creation of a single, unified site. Olmsted returned in time for the two architects to submit a polished proposal to the park board. The new site, 560 acres of it, roughly shaped like an arrowhead, had none of the drawbacks of the Central Park site. And there was no Andrew Green to quibble over expenditure. A large body of trees already existed that could be used to create a meadow, 300 feet wide and nearly one mile in length. Known as the Long Meadow, it may be the longest stretch of unbroken meadow in any U. S. park. The paths in the meadow were slightly sunken so that anyone looking across it would have an unbroken view. Olmsted and Vaux used a small kettle pond to create a waterfall, and a stream that led to a ravine. The farmland was used to create a 60-acre lake with winding shorelines and forested islands. Water for the lake was provided by 60-foot well and a powerful, steam-driven pump to fill it. Ignaz Pilat, instrumental in the selection of plants for Central Park, continued as an advisor for plantings in Prospect Park. In both parks, Ailanthus, the "Tree of Heaven" of Betty White's novel was represented. (Alas, Ailanthus is now considered an "invasive species.") The partners also had the assistance of engineers, architects, and managers who had helped create Central Park. The partners had learned well and created an even greater masterpiece in Brooklyn.

Nonetheless, for "reasons of personal convenience" Vaux and Olmsted dissolved their partnership in October 1874, ending 14 years of close association and many significant landscape projects. They liked and respected each other. They had worked closely and collaboratively on their commissions. But they couldn't discuss basic issues of landscape architecture without descending into quarrels. Vaux deeply resented the tendency of the press to give credit for Central Park solely to Olmsted. Olmsted always

dutifully corrected that impression. He was not successful, and Vaux often became both enraged and depressed, leading to friction between the two. Olmsted had once written that without Vaux, “I should have been a farmer.” However, he also said, “Mr. Vaux's ways are not my ways, and I could not mine to his.” In an exchange of letters when Vaux was encouraging Olmsted to return for work with Prospect Park, Vaux accused Olmsted of “insatiable egoism,” also writing that Olmsted felt “all theirs is ours, all ours is mine—and all mine is my own, or something like it. To the commission it was, I will work for the Park, but must have the reputation—and I must have it all---and I must have it immediately and I must have it always.”

Still, the future for Vaux looked good. The success of his projects with Olmsted were widely praised. He had a strong record of architectural achievement designing homes and large commercial buildings. He had won commissions for New York's Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Natural History, and substantial portions of both structures had been constructed. But he lost both commissions, with later expansion of both carried out by others, including William Morris Hunt. Because of his friendship with Loring Brace, a friend and childhood friend of Olmsted, he was asked to design tenements for the Child Welfare Society. But architectural fashion had changed, and he was criticized for his devotion to English Gothic. His commissions grew fewer. He wasn't helped by his “bumbling, agitated manner,” his frequent fiddling with his glasses. Perhaps his small stature at 4' 10” was a factor; perhaps he was considered difficult. He began to have financial difficulties. In 1892 his wife died with injuries resulting from a carriage accident. He became depressed, and his health began to fail.

On the evening of November 21, 1895, Vaux walked, as he often did, to watch the sunset at Gravesend Bay beach in Brooklyn. He did not return home. A search was begun. The next morning his body was found in Gravesend Bay. Accident or suicide. No one

knows.

Olmsted's public life was especially full of achievement, even fame. It was also marked by personal tragedy and occasional failure. His brother, to whom he was very close, died from tuberculosis in Nice in November 1857. He left a widow with 3 small children. His last letter to his brother said, "Don't let Mary suffer while you are alive." In June 1859 Frederick and Mary married. In June 1860, 8 days after the carriage accident that injured his hip, their son, John Theodore died on his 3-month birthday. A child born to them in 1866 lived only 6 hours. Olmsted would immerse himself in work after these events; he worked himself to exhaustion and experienced bouts of anxiety and depression. Professionally his career flourished.

In August 1888 Olmsted met with George Washington Vanderbilt as the latter man began his plans to build and landscape the lands that became Biltmore Estate in Ashvilled, North Carolina. Vanderbilt wanted only the best for both house and grounds, and for the house he retained William Morris Hunt. For the park, he obtained the services of Olmsted who eventually took on landscaping the 3-mile approach to the house. In 1895 Olmsted made a final visit to Asheville, staying in a guest cottage on the grounds. Aged 73, Olmsted was becoming forgetful and having difficulty remembering names. While at the estate, John Singer Sargent started portraits of both Olmsted and Hunt. He picked a location on the grounds, but Olmsted found these sessions too demanding. He decided to return home before Vanderbilt recognized his memory problems. His son Rick took his father's place in posing for the portrait.

Olmsted lived on for another 10 years, his memory growing worse with occasional moments of lucidity. In spite of Mary and the family's attempts to care for him at home as he wished, in September 1898 they moved him to McClean Asylum in Belmont,

Massachusetts, an institution for which, many years before, he had designed the grounds. On arrival at McClean, he is reported to have said, "They didn't carry out my plan, confound them." Olmsted died at McLean on August 28, 1903. He was 83.

POSTSCRIPT

There are excellent guides to Central Park and to Prospect Park, and member of the Literary Club may wish to resort to detailed accounts of both these projects. There were other capable and talented contributors to the park: Andrew Rey Mould, Ignaz Pilat, Jervis McEntee, the park engineers, other architects, masons, stoneworkers, and blacksmiths. The story of the laborers who built the parks has completely vanished. Credit also goes to Clarence Cook. Cook made that brief appearance as an assistant to Downing and Vaux in 1850. He emerges later as an influential art critic for the New York Times and as the author in 1869 of a detailed guide to the park..

THE END