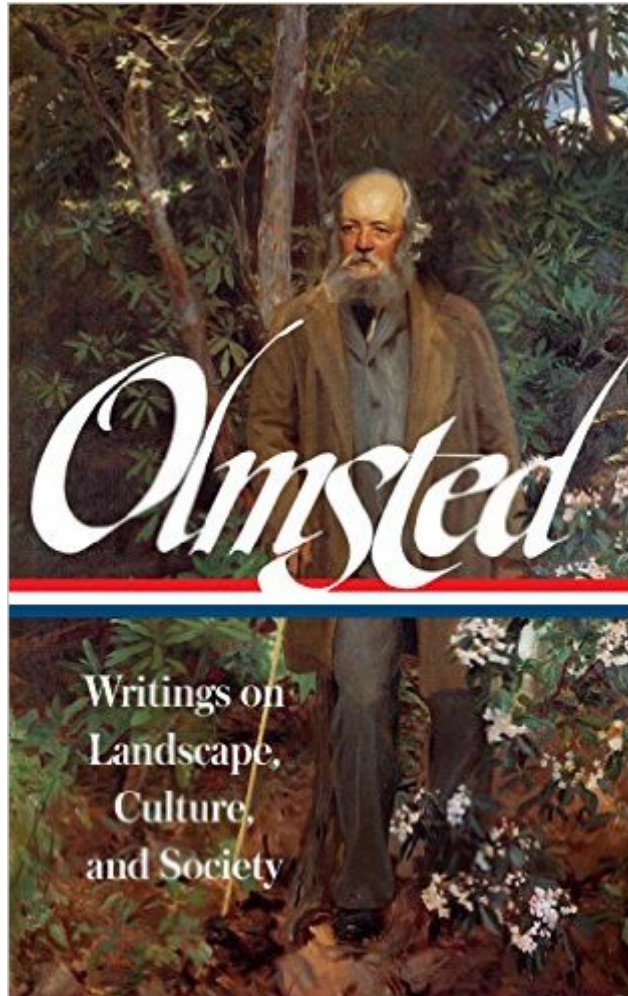


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Frederick Law Olmsted: Writings On Landscape, Culture, And Society: (Library Of America #270)



Synopsis

The biggest and best single-volume collection ever published of the fascinating and wide-ranging writings of a vitally important nineteenth century cultural figure whose work continues to shape our world today. Seaman, farmer, abolitionist, journalist, administrator, reformer, conservationist, and without question America's foremost landscape architect and urban planner, Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903) was a man of unusually diverse talents and interests, and the arc of his life and writings traces the most significant developments of nineteenth century American history. As this volume reveals, the wide-ranging endeavors Olmsted was involved in—cofounding *The Nation* magazine, advocating against slavery, serving as executive secretary to the United States Sanitary Commission (precursor to the Red Cross) during the Civil War, championing the preservation of America's great wild places at Yosemite and Yellowstone—emerged from his steadfast commitment to what he called "communitiveness," the impulse to serve the needs of one's fellow citizens. This philosophy had its ultimate expression in his brilliant designs for some of the country's most beloved public spaces: New York's Central Park, Prospect Park in Brooklyn, Boston's "Emerald Necklace," the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina, the grounds of the U.S. Capitol, garden suburbs like Chicago's Riverside, parkways (a term he invented) and college campuses, the "White City" of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, and many others. Gathering almost 100 original letters, newspaper dispatches, travel sketches, essays, editorials, design proposals, official reports, reflections on aesthetics, and autobiographical reminiscences, this deluxe Library of America volume is profusely illustrated with a 32-page color portfolio of Olmsted's design sketches, architectural plans, and contemporary photographs. It also includes detailed explanatory notes and a chronology of Olmsted's life and design projects.

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Customer Reviews

Read at the New York Society Library. The Earth Day Movement committed us to plant 7.8 billion trees for the Earth by 2020. As a strong believer in supporting the health of our planet, I am committed to help in the effort. That takes research, and a great place to start is with the writings of Frederick Law Olmsted. Central Park gave Olmsted his start, but there were many other projects. The National Association for Olmsted Parks has created a map showing the thousands of projects designed by the Olmsted family over a century-long span. By the early 1880s he had already designed Manhattan's Riverside Park, Brooklyn's Prospect Park, Niagara Falls State Park, Chicago's South Park system, and Detroit's Belle Isle. Other commissions included numerous college campuses such as Cornell University, University of Berkeley's Piedmont Avenue, and the University of Maine, the management of the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove, and the grounds of the U.S. Capitol. Olmsted was devoted to trees all of his life. Olmsted argued that both the "air purifying value" and the "decorative motive" of planting trees were subordinate to its paramount object: to offer a restorative, often unconscious, "solace and comfort" to town-strained minds. • See Frederick Law Olmsted: The Passion of a Public Artist (American Social Experience Series) by Melvin Kalfus.

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