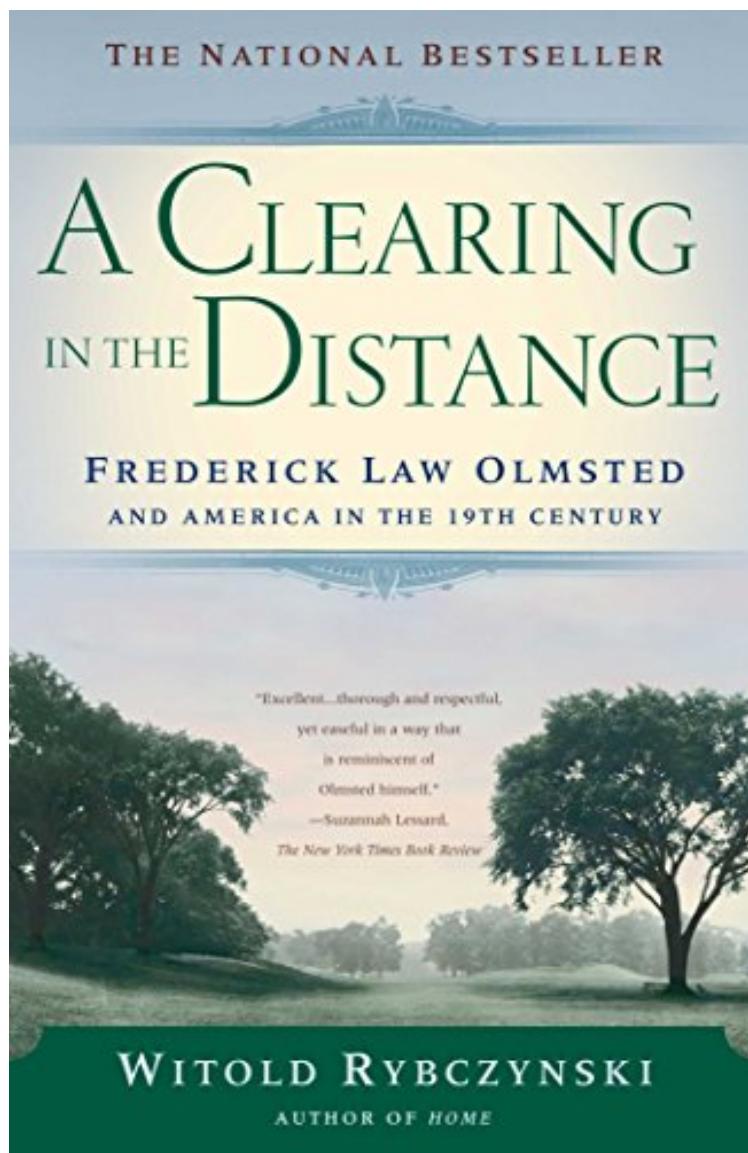


A Clearing In The Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the 19th Century

Witold Rybczynski

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Witold Rybczynski : A Clearing In The Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the 19th Century
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Clearing In The Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the 19th Century:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An Excellent Book Dealing Not Only with Landscaping but also our American HistoryBy Roland DroitschThis is an extraordinary book! I highly recommend it to readers as it tells of the life of a famous landscape architect. I had thought that Olmstead was the gentleman who designed Central Park in

New Your City. Yes he did but I never knew of the many other things he did, including the grounds around the U.S. Capitol and many other parks around the country. He never even went to college, but he clearly was an erudite man who was able to both design parks and organize his business structure. I highly recommend this book to those who are interested in U.S. history and also the development of many of our parks. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great mind

By Sean Patrick Innocent Dineen

Great story of the man who fought for landscape Add to dictionary and disability inclusion

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A master in many fields, and the original 'green' visionary

By ct reader

This is a brilliant account of an American legend. His career was a remarkable adventure: surveyor, sailor, farmer, merchant, social commentator, author, abolitionist, planner, construction manager, wartime administrator, mining executive, and (finally) consummate landscape architect. The author skillfully conveys these transitions in an lively narrative that ably portrays 19C America as well. Olmstead's creativity was served by a pragmatic versatility capable of working wonders. Anticipating dense urbanism and frontier encroachment, he pioneered municipal parks and wilderness preserves that today remain invaluable oasis's. Though largely self-taught (like Washington and Lincoln), he collaborated as an equal with the luminous figures of his day (most formally trained: Vaux, Richardson, McKim, Mead, White, Post, Burnham, Root, Hunt, Saint-Gaudens). He was interested in new technology (electric boats and lighting, drainage, transportation) and took a leading edge to incorporate it in his work. Ultimately, his legacy is not only one of exceptional work (enjoyed by many cities, including Hartford -his birthplace), but the invention of a skilled professional discipline that continues to enrich human life today. This work (illustrated and annotated) was a delight. Highly recommended. I wish it was available when I attempted to make my way through Laura Wood Roper's torturous 'FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmstead' in 1973 (it sits on my shelf yet half unread). Also recommended: Cynthia Zaitzevsky's 'Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System' (1982) a great record of Olmstead's Boston park development (with plans and photographs).

In a brilliant collaboration between writer and subject, Witold Rybczynski, the bestselling author of *Home and City Life*, illuminates Frederick Law Olmsted's role as a major cultural figure at the epicenter of nineteenth-century American history. We know Olmsted through the physical legacy of his stunning landscapes -- among them, New York's Central Park, California's Stanford University campus, and Boston's Back Bay Fens. But Olmsted's contemporaries knew a man of even more extraordinarily diverse talents. Born in 1822, he traveled to China on a merchant ship at the age of twenty-one. He cofounded *The Nation* magazine and was an early voice against slavery. He managed California's largest gold mine and, during the Civil War, served as the executive secretary to the United States Sanitary Commission, the precursor of the Red Cross. Rybczynski's passion for his subject and his understanding of Olmsted's immense complexity and accomplishments make his book a triumphant work. In *A Clearing in the Distance*, the story of a great nineteenth-century American becomes an intellectual adventure.