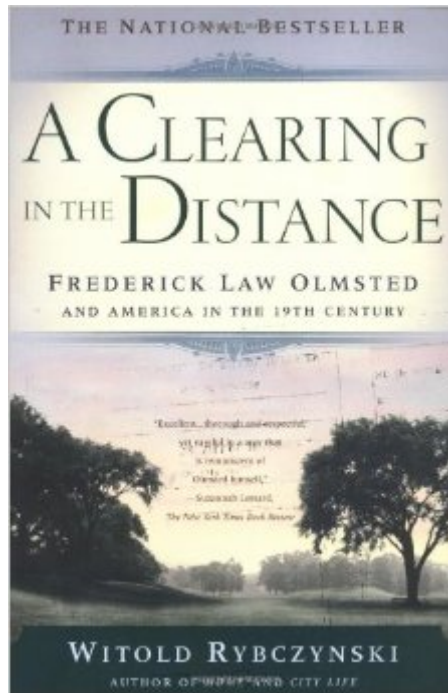


The book was found

A Clearing In The Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted And America In The 19th Century



Synopsis

In a brilliant collaboration between writer and subject, Witold Rybczynski, the bestselling author of *Now I Sit Me Down*, 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.

Book Information

Paperback: 480 pages

Publisher: Scribner; 1st Edition edition (July 5, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0684865750

ISBN-13: 978-0684865751

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.3 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars— See all reviews— (37 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #233,954 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #114 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Architecture > Landscape #361 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs >

Professionals & Academics > Journalists #394 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Artists, Architects & Photographers

Customer Reviews

If I told you that I've just read an excellent biographical memoir about an American original where the author is a looming presence and sections of the book, which masquerade as primary resource material, are actually fabricated by the biographer, you would probably assume that I'd broken down and bought the Edmund Morris book, *Dutch*. In fact, Witold Rybczynski's biography of the great American landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), includes imagined thoughts

and dialogue that the author himself crafted. As he told Brian Lamb on Booknotes, he doesn't much like docudramas but found the technique could be valuable. Indeed, the author is a character in the book, sharing his opinions and walking through Olmsted's parks, sharing his observations. I mention this, not because it takes away from the book, but because they are fairly typical techniques.

Actually, the biographer is a presence in virtually every biography, starting with the choice of whom to write about, but then continuing with the editorial judgments about how to play incidents and what to put in and leave out. If authors like Morris and Rybczynski are more open about it than most, more power to them. Meanwhile, Rybczynski's subject here, in addition to designing and building Central Park, Prospect Park, etc., was also a sailor, farmer, journalist, founder of *The Nation*, author of several still pertinent books on the functioning of slavery in the South, and remained throughout his life an honest and honorable public servant. The author tells his story well and offers one important theme of Olmsted's work that retains its relevance. Olmsted, whom we perceive as a naturalist and environmentalist, believed that wilderness, open spaces and nature itself should serve humans.

[Download to continue reading...](#)

A Clearing In The Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the 19th Century Frederick Law Olmsted: Plans and Views of Public Parks (The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted) Frederick Douglass : Autobiographies : Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave / My Bondage and My Freedom / Life and Times of Frederick Douglass (Library of America) Frederick Law Olmsted: Writings on Landscape, Culture, and Society: (Library of America #270) Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts Frederick's Journey: The Life of Frederick Douglass (Big Words) Nineteenth-Century Music (California Studies in 19th-Century Music) 19th Century Card Photos KwikGuide: A Step-by-Step Guide to Identifying and Dating Cartes de Visite and Cabinet Cards Architecture and Interior Design from the 19th Century, Volume II Five Points: The 19th-Century New York City Neighborhood That Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum Blood and Roses [Old Edition]: The Vampire in 19th Century Literature (Creature Classics Ser.)) The Kingdom of Matthias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in 19th-Century AmericaÂ AMERICAN COUNTRY BUILDING DESIGN: Rediscovered Plans For 19th-Century American Farmhouses, Cottages, Landscapes, Barns, Carriage Houses & Outbuildings The Vanishing Velázquez: A 19th Century Bookseller's Obsession with a Lost Masterpiece 2014 Calendar: Van Gogh: 12-Month Calendar Featuring Famous Fine-Art Paintings From One Of The Greatest 19Th-Century Artists Wool AppliquÃ© Folk Art: Traditional Projects Inspired by 19th-Century American Life 19th Century Plains

Indian Dresses Shaping the West: American Sculptors of the 19th Century (Western Passages)

Christianity & Western Thought: Faith & Reason in the 19th Century: 2

[Dmca](#)