Laura Wood Roper Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2004

Contact information: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm96083853

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms001020

Prepared by Bradley E. Gernand with the assistance of Deloris Butler
Revised by Michael Spangler

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2001
Revised 2018 September
Collection Summary
Title: Laura Wood Roper Papers
Span Dates: 1825-1982
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1871-1895 and 1948-1952)
ID No.: MSS83853
Creator: Roper, Laura Wood, 1911-
Extent: 2,280 items
Extent: 19 containers
Extent: 9 linear feet
Extent: 10 microfilm reels
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm96083853
Summary: Biographer of Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903). Correspondence, research notes, reports, clippings, and printed matter related to Olmsted and the landscape architectural firm, Olmsted Associates (1961- ) and its predecessors, collected by Roper for her biography of Olmsted. Also includes card indexes containing abstracts mostly from Olmsted's correspondence in the Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People
Eliot, Charles, 1859-1897--Correspondence.
Hubbard, Theodora Kimball, 1887-1935--Correspondence.
Olmsted, Frederick Law, 1822-1903. Frederick Law Olmsted papers.
Olmsted, Frederick Law, 1870-1957--Correspondence.
Olmsted, John Charles, 1852-1920--Correspondence.

Organizations
Olmsted Brothers. Olmsted Brothers records.

Subjects
Capitols.
City planning.
Exhibitions.
Landscape architecture.
Parks.

Occupations
Authors.
Biographers.

Provenance
The papers of Laura Wood Roper, biographer of Frederick Law Olmsted, were given to the Library of Congress by Roper in 1975 and 1992. The 1975 gift was included in the papers of Frederick Law Olmsted and is described in the finding aid for that collection. Her 1992 gifts comprise this collection and are described herein.
Processing History
The papers of Laura Woods Roper were organized and described in 1996. The register was revised in 2004.

Transfers
Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Cartographic records have been transferred to the Geography and Map Division. A lithograph has been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Laura Wood Roper Papers.

Copyright Status
Copyright in the unpublished writings of Laura Wood Roper in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions
The papers of Laura Wood Roper are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Microfilm
A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on ten reels. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan.

Preferred Citation
Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, Laura Wood Roper Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911, Mar. 15</td>
<td>Born, St. Louis, Mo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Married W. Crosby Roper, Jr. (died 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>A. B., Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Published Walter Reed: Doctor in Uniform. New York: J. Messner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Published Louis Pasteur: New York: J. Messner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Published FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scope and Content Note

The papers of Laura Newbold Wood Roper (1911-2003) span the years 1822-1982 (bulk dates 1871-1895 and 1948-1952) and include original papers of Frederick Law Olmsted and the firm Olmsted Associates. Olmsted's son, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., also a landscape architect and longtime principal of Olmsted Associates, sanctioned Roper's efforts and provided her many of the items which make up this collection from his family and office files. An earlier group of material collected by Roper was given to the Library of Congress in 1975 and incorporated into the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers at that time. The Roper Papers also include her correspondence, research notes, and related material and are organized into the following series: Frederick Law Olmsted, Olmsted Associates, Indexes to Correspondence, and Microfilm.

The Frederick Law Olmsted series relates to the older Olmsted and his work and consists chiefly of correspondence, reports, newspaper clippings, and related information. It is organized by subject and concerns city planning, expositions, capitols, parks, Olmsted's business partners, and his writings. The series also includes scattered correspondence with Theodora Kimball Hubbard, a bibliographer who researched Olmsted in the 1920s.

Correspondence and reports of Olmsted Associates comprise the second series. Although some of the correspondence is original, there are also copies or research findings prepared for Roper's use by Stella D. Obst, longtime secretary to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. Correspondents include John Charles Olmsted, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Charles Eliot. Topics include civic projects and the firm's work. There is also much biographical information about the Olmsteds, circa 1898-1954.

The third series contains indexes to the correspondence in the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers compiled by Roper for her biography of Olmsted. The cards include an abstract of each letter indexed and are grouped into a chronological index, a subject index, correspondent, and an author and recipient index. Categories and subcategories of the subject index are generally filed alphabetically and have been listed at the end of this finding aid as an appendix.

The Microfilm series reproduces the card indexes, although with some omissions, and inconsistencies in the filming sequence. It also includes a card file which no longer exists in textual format containing transcripts, excerpts, and notes from newspaper and magazine articles, the journal of Olmsted’s father, John Olmsted (1791-1873), and correspondence.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in four series:

- Frederick Law Olmsted, 1834-1982
- Olmsted Associates, 1894-1958
- Indexes to Correspondence, 1863-1928
- Microfilm, 1825-1928
Description of Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-5</td>
<td>Frederick Law Olmsted, 1834-1982</td>
<td>Correspondence, reports, newspaper and journal clippings, printed matter, and research notes. Arranged alphabetically by subject, type of material, or name of person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 5-6</td>
<td>Olmsted Associates, 1894-1958</td>
<td>Correspondence and associated reports, newspaper clippings, and printed matter. Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 7-17</td>
<td>Indexes to Correspondence, 1863-1928</td>
<td>Card file indexes with abstracts of letters grouped into chronological, subject, and author and recipient categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REEL 1-10</td>
<td>Microfilm, 1825-1928</td>
<td>Microfilm edition of Indexes to Correspondence. Also reproduces a card file that is no longer extant of transcripts, extracts, and notes from newspaper and magazine articles, a journal, and correspondence. Indexes filmed in the categories described above, with some omissions and inconsistencies in filming sequence. Transcripts, extracts, and notes arranged by type of material and therein chronologically. Microfilm shelf number 21,458.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 1-5   | **Frederick Law Olmsted, 1834-1982**  
Correspondence, reports, newspaper and journal clippings, printed matter, and research notes.  
Arranged alphabetically by subject, type of material, or name of person. |
| BOX 1     | Agricultural colleges, 1864-1866, 1949, undated  
André, Edouard, 1951  
Arboreta, 1928, 1954  
Articles and essays, 1844, 1893, 1928, 1948-1954  
"A" miscellaneous, 1951  
Biographical, 1866, 1884, 1893, 1903, 1918-1921, 1946, undated  
Books, 1882, 1941, undated  
Bowles, Samuel, 1875  
Brace, Charles Loring, 1874, 1890  
Burnham, Daniel Hudson, 1922  
"B" miscellaneous, 1947-1952  
Capitols  
   - Albany, N.Y., 1876-1880, 1886-1889  
   - Montgomery, Ala., undated  
Cemeteries, 1864-1865, 1886, undated  
City planning  
   - General, 1891  
   - Riverside, Ill., 1860, 1868-1869  
   - Staten Island, N.Y., 1870, 1921  
   - Tacoma, Wash., 1975  
   - Washington, D.C., 1861-1864, 1874, 1882-1885, 1949  
Correspondence, 1962, undated |
"C" miscellaneous, 1877, 1948-1953, 1970  
Dana, Charles Anderson, 1924  
Dickens, Charles, 1951  
Downing, Alexander Jackson, circa 1895, 1949-1955, undated  
Earth closets, 1869  
Errington, Harriet, 1951-1952  
Expositions  
   - World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill. (1893), 1890-1894, 1957, 1975, undated  
   - World's Fair, New York, N.Y. (circa 1892), 1869-1889  
Gardening, 1886, undated  
Godkin, Edward Lawrence, 1942, 1950-1951  
Green, Andrew Haswell, undated  
Honors, 1892-1893, 1898, 1928-1929
Hurlbert, William Henry, 1950
"H" miscellaneous, 1948-1952, undated
Illustrations, undated
Interviews with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., 1948-1952, undated
Knapp, Frederick N., circa 1864, 1957, undated
"K" miscellaneous, 1948-1949
Landscape architecture
   Bibliography, 1921, 1927, 1946, undated
   California, circa 1870, 1947, undated
   Education, 1882
   History, 1886, 1906, 1921, 1943-1950, 1957, undated
   Terminology, 1860, 1875, 1924, 1949, 1963
"L." miscellaneous, 1951-1952
Martin, William R., 1877
Nation, 1867, 1949-1950, undated
Newspaper clippings, 1855-156
Nurseries, 1874-1887, 1912
"N" miscellaneous, 1887, 1914, 1950
Olmsted, Gideon, circa 1855, 1955
Olmsted, John Charles, 1920, undated
Olmsted, Mary Cleveland Perkins, 1847, 1921, undated
Parks
   Architectural structures, circa 1890
   Baltimore, Md., 1876, 1968
   Buffalo, N.Y., 1868-1869, 1877, 1887-1889, undated
   Chicago, Ill., 1889
   Detroit, Mich., 1881, 1887
   General, 1897, undated
   Haddam, Conn., 1941, 1955-1956
   Hartford, Conn., circa 1870, 1890
   Hot Springs, Ark., 1893
   Louisville, Ky., 1891
   New Orleans, La., 1900
   New York, N.Y.
      Articles and newspapers clippings, 1857-1860, 1875, 1880-1885, 1892, 1910, 1917,
      Correspondence, 1860, 1869, 1883, 1922, 1927-1928, 1949, undated
      Reports, indices, 1857-1870, 1966, undated
      Riverside Park, 1874-1875, 1925
   Newark, N.J., 1927
   Newburgh, N.Y., 1889
Frederick Law Olmsted, 1834-1982

Container | Contents
---|---

**BOX 4**

Niagara, N.Y., 1879-1883, 1887-1893
Montreal, Que., 1876-1881, 1967, undated
Saint Catherine's, Ont., 1887
Washington, D.C., 1941, 1953
Parmentier, André, 1950-1951
Partnerships, 1872, 1952, 1961
Portraits and silhouettes, undated
Private estates
   Asheville, N.C., 1890-1893, 1949, 1982, undated
   England, 1973, undated
   Mariposa, Calif., 1876, 1949-1951, 1959, undated
Professional procedures, 1883
Progress and advancement, 1851, 1864
Publishing firm, 1949
Raymond, Henry J., 1948
Renwick, James, 1959
Residences, 1873, 1896, 1936, 1956, undated
Riotte, Charles N., 1949
Robinson, William, 1948-1951
Russel[?] (William Howard?) (correspondent), 1863
Schurz, Carl, 1952, 1972
Schuyler, Louisa Lee, 1950
Shurcliff, Arthur A., reminiscences of Olmsted, 1952
Speeches and statements, 1975-1982
   (8 folders)

**BOX 5**

Spoils of the Park, 1882
Stanford, Leland, Jr., 1882
State Charities Aid Association, 1938, undated
"S" miscellaneous, 1950, undated
Turnpikes, 1864
"T" miscellaneous, 1927, 1949, 1963
Universities and colleges
   Stanford University, Stanford, Calif., 1887-1893, 1957
   University of California, Berkeley, Calif., 1874, undated
   Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y., 1921, 1948
Vaux, Calvert, 1876-1877, 1894, 1920, 1952
Viele, Egbert L., 1861-1864, 1883, 1923
Waring, George E., Jr., 1948
Weidenmann, Jacob, circa 1884, 1946-1950
Works by Olmsted, 1893, 1971
Writings, circa 1910-circa 1949
   (2 folders)
"W" miscellaneous, 1894-1976, undated

**BOX 5-6**  
Olmsted Associates, 1894-1958  
Correspondence and associated reports, newspaper clippings, and printed matter.  
Arranged chronologically.

**BOX 5**  
1894-1943  
(2 folders)

**BOX 6**  
1944-1958, undated  
(3 folders)

**BOX 7-17**  
Indexes to Correspondence, 1863-1928  
Card file indexes with abstracts of letters grouped into chronological, subject, and author and recipient categories.

**BOX 7**  
Chronological index  
1863, May-1871, Aug.

**BOX 8**  
1871, Sept.-1875, Nov.

**BOX 9**  
1875, Dec.-1881, Jan.

**BOX 10**  
1881, Feb.-1886, Mar.

**BOX 11**  
1886, Apr.-1896, June  
1902, Nov.-1904, Feb.  
1912, Nov.-1921, May  
1928, Aug.  
Undated

**BOX 12**  
Subject index  
Accounting-Oyster

**BOX 13**  
Persons, "A-Z" (excluding "O")

**BOX 14**  
Persons, "O"  
Panics (economic)-Paris, France  
Parks  
General-District of Columbia

**BOX 15**  
Illinois-Wisconsin

**BOX 16**  
Periodicals-Rugby, Tenn.

**BOX 17**  
St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern Railroad-Zoo specimens

**BOX 18**  
Author and recipient index  
Author  
Abbot, T. C.-"The Nursery"

**BOX 19**  
Oakey, A. F.-Zimmerman, Charles D  
Unidentified

**BOX 19**  
Recipient  
Abbott, C. F.-Wright, Albert  
Unidentified

**REEL 1-10**  
Microfilm, 1825-1928  
Microfilm edition of Indexes to Correspondence. Also reproduces a card file that is no longer extant of transcripts, extracts, and notes from newspaper and magazine articles,
a journal, and correspondence. Indexes filmed in the categories described above, with some
omissions and inconsistencies in filming sequence.
Transcripts, extracts, and notes arranged by type of material and therein chronologically.
Microfilm shelf number 21,458.

REEL 1
Indexes to correspondence
Chronological index
- 1871, Sept.-1876, Feb.
- 1865, Nov.-1871, Aug.
- 1887, Mar.-1895, Dec.
- 1902, Nov.-1904, Feb.
- 1912, Nov.-1921, May
- 1928, Aug.
- 1876, Mar.-1881, Feb.

REEL 2
- 1881, Mar.-1887, Feb.

REEL 3
Subject index
Accounting-Oyster
Persons
- “A-Z” (excluding “O”)
- Oakey, A. F.-Olmsted, Frederick Erskine
- Olmsted, Frederick Law
- Advice to-Character

REEL 4
Character-Whereabouts
- Olmsted, Frederick Law, Jr.-Owen, Robert Dale
Panics (economic)-Paris, France
Private Places
- “Biltmore,” Ashville, N.C.

REEL 5
Pump-Zoo specimens
Unclassified

REEL 6
Author and recipient index
Author
- Abbot, T. C.-Olmsted, Frederick Erskine
- Olmsted, Frederick Law (incomplete)

REEL 7
Olmsted firms
- Olmsted, Frederick Law, Jr.-Zimmerman, Charles D.
- Unidentified
Recipient
- Abbott, C. F.-Young, Mason
- Unidentified

REEL 8
Transcripts, extracts, and notes
Newspapers and magazine articles, 1847-1890
Journal kept by John Olmsted (1791-1873), 1825-1881
Correspondence
- 1832-1859, Dec. 21

REEL 9
- 1860, Jan. 4-1862, July 26
- 1863, Feb. 17-Dec. 31
## Microfilm, 1825-1928

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<tr>
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<td>Sept. 24-Dec. 30</td>
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<td>Jan. 1-Sept. 23</td>
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<td>1865, Jan. 1-1895, Oct. 13</td>
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<td>1921, Feb. 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>REEL 10</td>
<td>1862, July 25-1863, Feb. 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix: Headings Used in Subject Index

Listed as received

- Accounting
- Agricultural societies, congresses, etc.
- Allston's self-portrait
- American Academy of Political and Social Science
- American Institute of Architects
- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- American Forestry Association
- American Institute of Architects
- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- American Social Science Association
- Appeals and pressure for money, jobs, advice, and influence
- Aquaria
- Arboreta, by name
- Architects and artists
- Arsenals and military establishment
- Art, architecture, and ornament
- Birds, by type
- Blue Anchor Society
- Boats
- Books on landscape architecture and gardening
- Boston Coop Building Co.
- Boston Society of Civil Engineers
- Boston Memorial Association
- Boston Society of Architects
- Botanical gardens
- Brazil
- Brookline, Mass.
- Brooklyn Bridge, New York, N.Y.
- Brooks Vale
- Buffalo, N.Y.
- Building materials and methods
- Bussey Institute for Horticulture
- Capitols, by place
- Carpet bedding
- Cemeteries
- Census bulletins
- Charities
- Chicago, Ill.
- Chicago Academy of Design
- Churches and cathedrals
- City planning
- Civil service reform
- Clubs, by name
- Colleges and universities
- Competitions
- Conservation and preservation
- Cooperative Colony Aid Association
- Copyright
- Country club membership
- Cyclopedias, by name
- Deer Isle, Me.
• District of Columbia
• Dix and Edwards, Inc.
• Drains and drainage
• Earth closets
• Education
• Emerson house
• Engineers
• England
• Erie Canal
• Evaporation
• Expositions
• Fences
• Fertilizer
• Fires, by city
• Fish and fisheries
• Flush tanks
• Forests and foresteries
• France
• Freedmen's Bureau
• Free trade
• Gardens and gardening
• Geological surveys
• Governor's Island, N.Y.
• Gravel
• Gravetye, England
• *Handbook for Visitors to Poorhouse*
• Health and health associations
• Historical societies
• Hospitals, by name
• Hotels, beaches, and resorts
• Housing
• Humane Society
• Iceland
• Immigration
• International Arbitration and Peace Association
• Introductions
• Iron work
• Inventions
• Japan
• Jeffersonville, Ind.
• *Johnson's Illustrated Universal Cyclopaedia*
• Kew, England
• Labor and laborers
• Landscape architecture--Legislation, lighting, libraries, livestock, lodging houses
• Loyal Legion, Mass., Commandery of
• Malaria
• Malden Library, Malden, Mass.
• Marblehead
• Mariposa mining estates, Calif.
• Metropolitan Public Gardens Assn.
• Mines
• Model Yacht Club
• Montauk Association
• Monuments, memorials, statues, fountains
• Morgan (J. P.) and Co, Inc.
• Morocco
• Muddy River
• Museums
• Music
• National Association of Sanitary and Rural Development
• Natural History Society
• Negroes
• New England Emigrant Aid Society
• New Hampshire Forestry Commission
• New Haven, Conn.
• Newport, R. I.
• Newspapers, by city and name
• New York
• Nicaragua Association for Improvement of the Condition of the Poor
• New York Board of Health
• New York Infant Asylum
• New York State Bar Association
• New York State Charities Aid Assn.
• Nomenclature
• Norfolk, Va.
• Nurseries
• Oil in California
• Old South Museum
• Orleans County, N. Y. poorhouse
• Oyster shell lime
• Olmsted firms [correspondence]
• Persons
  • "A"-"Z" (excluding "O")
  • Oakey, A. F.-Olmsted, Frederick Erskine
  • Olmsted, Frederick Law--Advice to; autographs; biographical data, character, standing, and appreciation; clubs, associations, honorary degrees; consulship; current work; domestic affairs; estimate of own work and of self; expert witness; Farm, S. I.; fees and income; gifts, donations, loans; health; inventions; investments; job offers; litigations; mention in publications; offices held; open eyed sleep; pets; photographs and portraits; plans and hopes; professional procedure; public office; religion; residence; royalties; speeches and articles; Sunday question; use of name; whereabouts
  • Olmsted, Frederick Law, Jr.
  • Olmsted, John
  • Olmsted, John Charles
  • Olmsted, John Hull
  • Olmsted, John Theodore
  • Olmsted, M. [Mary or Marion]
  • Olmsted, Mary Ann
  • Olmsted, Mary Cleveland Bryant
  • Olmsted, Owen Frederick
  • Olmsted, Owen Pitkin
  • Olmsted firms and associations
  • Olmsted genealogy and letters
  • O’Reilly, Chas-Owen, Robert Dale
• Panics (economics)
• Pantographs
• Parades and parade grounds
• Parks
• Park commissions
• Park police
• Parks, by place--use of; value of;
• Periodicals--*Garden and Forest; Nation; New Examiner*
• Photosculpture
• Plant material
• Plants, by name
• Play grounds
• Politics
• Ponds and pond gardening
• Population
• Prisons and prison associations
• Private places, by estate title and by name of owner
• Pumps
• Railroads
• Rapid transit
• Recreation
• Redwoods
• Residential development, by state and province
• Riding
• Roads and streets, by place
• Rockery
• Rocky Mountain Cattle Co.
• Rugby
• St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern Railway Co.
• Sanitation
• Sanitary Commission
• Scenery, by place
• Schools
• Scribner's Sons, Charles
• Sea islands, Port Royal Sound, S. C.
• Sewage and drainage
• Sherwood Land Co.
• Siemen Brothers, Inc.
• Slavery
• *Small* (ship S.S. *Wilson Small*)
• Social statistics
• Society and progress
• Social commentary
• The South
• Southern Famine Relief Commission
• Spain
• Speedways
• Spiritualism
• Sports and exercise
• Staten Island, N.Y.
• Stevens Institute
• Stockbridge, Mass.
• Strikes
• Suburban [?]
• Summit, N.J.
• Tammany Hall
• Tariffs
• Telephones
• Terraces
• Toledo, Ohio
• Tools, machines, and materials
• Trees, by type
• Tree cutting
• Tree planting
• United States Coast and Geodetic Survey
• United States Hot Springs [Ark.] Commission
• United States War Department
• War
• Urinals
• Ventilation
• Versailles, France
• Village improvement and societies
• Wages
• Walls
• Waterbury, Conn.
• Watercourses
• Water closets
• Water supply
• Webster [ship S.S. Daniel Webster]
• Windmills
• Windsor Terrace, N.Y.
• Wine
• Winter gardens
• Women
• Women's Central Relief Association
• Women's congress
• Woods