Collection Summary

Title: Laura Wood Roper Papers
Inclusive Dates: 1825-1982
Bulk Dates: 1871-1895 and 1948-1952
ID No.: MSS83853
Creator: Roper, Laura Wood, 1911-2003
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.

Acquisition Information

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 by Bradley E. Gernand with the assistance of Deloris Butler. The register was revised in 2004 by Michael Spangler. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

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>A. B., Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Married W. Crosby Roper, Jr. (died 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Published <em>Walter Reed: Doctor in Uniform</em>. New York: J. Messner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Published <em>Louis Pasteur</em>. New York: J. Messner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Published <em>FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted</em>. 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, capitol, 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

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<thead>
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<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-5</td>
<td><strong>Frederick Law Olmsted, 1834-1982</strong></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><strong>Olmsted Associates, 1894-1958</strong></td>
<td>Correspondence and associated reports, newspaper clippings, and printed matter. Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 7-17</td>
<td><strong>Indexes to Correspondence, 1863-1928</strong></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><strong>Microfilm, 1825-1928</strong></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  
Arboretum, 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  
Frederick Law Olmsted, 1834-1982

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, 1855-1856
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

Laura Wood Roper Papers
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
Periodicals-Rugby, Tenn.

BOX 16  St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern Railroad-Zoo specimens

BOX 17  Author and recipient index
Author
Abbot, T. C.-"The Nursery"

BOX 18  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

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

REEL 6
Olmsted firms
Olmsted, Frederick Law, Jr.-Zimmerman, Charles D.
Unidentified
Recipient
Abbott, C. F.-Young, Mason
Unidentified

REEL 7
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 8
1860, Jan. 4-1862, July 26
1863, Feb. 17-Dec. 31
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<td>REEL 9</td>
<td>1864</td>
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<td>Sept. 24-Dec. 30</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan. 1-Sept. 23</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1865, Jan. 1-1895, Oct. 13</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<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 forestries
• 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