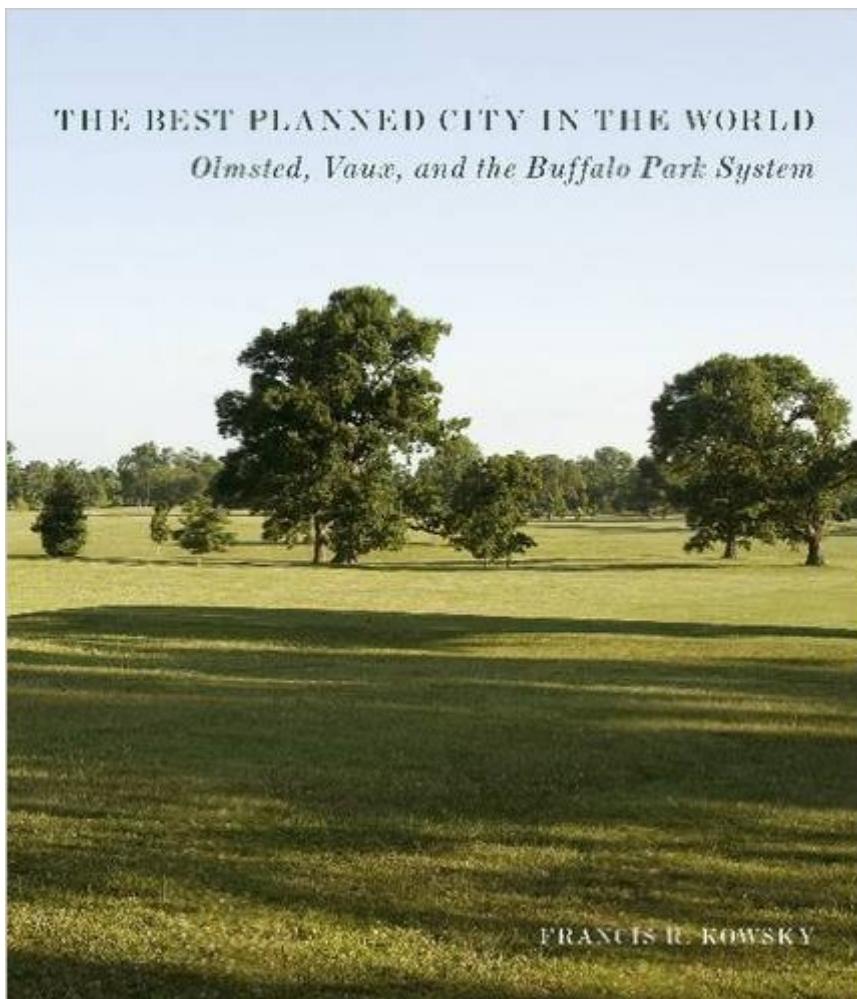


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The Best Planned City In The World: Olmsted, Vaux, And The Buffalo Park System (Designing The American Park)



Synopsis

Beginning in 1868, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux created a series of parks and parkways for Buffalo, New York, that drew national and international attention. The improvements carefully augmented the city's original plan with urban design features inspired by Second Empire Paris, including the first system of "parkways" to grace an American city. Displaying the plan at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, Olmsted declared Buffalo "the best planned city, as to streets, public places, and grounds, in the United States, if not in the world." Olmsted and Vaux dissolved their historic partnership in 1872, but Olmsted continued his association with the Queen City of the Lakes, designing additional parks and laying out important sites within the growing metropolis. When Niagara Falls was threatened by industrial development, he led a campaign to protect the site and in 1885 succeeded in persuading New York to create the Niagara Reservation, the present Niagara Falls State Park. Two years later, Olmsted and Vaux teamed up again, this time to create a plan for the area around the Falls, a project the two grand masters regarded as "the most difficult problem in landscape architecture to do justice to." In this book Francis R. Kowsky illuminates this remarkable constellation of projects. Utilizing original plans, drawings, photographs, and copious numbers of reports and letters, he brings new perspective to this vast undertaking, analyzing it as a cohesive expression of the visionary landscape and planning principles that Olmsted and Vaux pioneered. Published in association with Library of American Landscape History: <http://lalh.org/>

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

What great Buffalo history and thorough presentation of Olmsted and Buffalo's parks. It's a great coffee table book, but, moreso, it is easy and engaging reading, cover to cover. Not the dry book I feared it might be. I enjoyed it and will probably give it as a gift many times over.

Having read the author's biography of Calvert Vaux, I looked forward to this book with its focus on Olmsted, the other half of the designers who collaborated on the invention of New York's Central Park and so many other parks across the nation (although it is Olmsted who must be given the most credit with convincing cities to plan beautiful parks that all their citizens could enjoy). My wife and I were also visiting Buffalo for the first time so that reading this book gave us the framework and history we needed in order to drive around the city and encounter the significant remains of Olmsted's great park system (and really city street design). This book is thorough in its recounting of how the system came to be and satisfactorily descriptive, both in text and visualization, of the park system as it evolved and remains today. The book is reflective itself of its subject, well-planned and executed with great attention to detail. The dust jacket with its sweeping wraparound photograph of one of the park landscapes is beautiful and also symbolic of Olmsted's own vision. The maps and historic photographs are well chosen. But it is the solid research and convincing writing that provides the satisfying foundation for this well-wrought work. .

A very nice collection of photographs and drawings that highlight and showcase the work of Olmsted and Vaux in Buffalo. It shows both the beginning and evolution of the park system, with wonderful pictures of the times.

Wonderful! I love my Buffalo City!! This book highlights this wonderful park system we have. If you'd like to see how a great planning method can be realized read this book.

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