Laura Wood Roper Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2004
Revised 2010 April

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

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LC Online Catalog record:
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Revised by Michael Spangler

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 ; 19 containers ; 9 linear feet ; 10 microfilm reels
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
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 Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

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.
Roper, Laura Wood, 1911-

Organizations
F.L. and J.C. Olmsted (Firm : 1897-1898) F.L. and J.C. Olmsted (Firm : 1897-1898) records.
Olmsted Associates. Olmsted Associates records.
Olmsted Brothers. Olmsted Brothers records.
Olmsted, Olmsted, and Eliot. Olmsted, Olmsted, and Eliot records.

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

Occupations
Authors.
Biographers.

Administrative Information

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

Date	*Event*
1911, Mar. 15	Born, St. Louis, Mo.
1932	A. B., Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.
1940	Married W. Crosby Roper, Jr. (died 1982)
1943	Published *Walter Reed: Doctor in Uniform.* New York: J. Messner
1944	Published *Raymond L. Ditmars: His Exciting Career With Reptiles, Animals and Insects.* New York: J. Messner; republished in 1951, London: R. Hale. Published as *Schlangen, Seltene Tiere und Insekten: das Forscherleben von Raymond L. Ditmars.* Berlin: P. H. Ohlert., 1949
1948	Published *Louis Pasteur.* New York: J. Messner
1973	Published *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press
2003, Dec. 5	Died, Cotuit, Mass.

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

Container	*Series*
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 5-6	**Olmsted Associates, 1894-1958** Correspondence and associated reports, newspaper clippings, and printed matter. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 7-17	**Indexes to Correspondence, 1863-1928** Card file indexes with abstracts of letters grouped into chronological, subject, and author and recipient categories.
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.

Container List

Container	*Contents*
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
	New York, N.Y., 1858, 1864, 1881, 1889, 1916, 1933, 1948, 1965
	Riverside, Ill., 1860, 1868-1869
	Staten Island, N.Y., 1870, 1921
	Tacoma, Wash., 1975
	Washington, D.C., 1861-1864, 1874, 1882-1885, 1949
	Cleveland, Horace William Shaler, 1967-1970
	Correspondence, 1962, undated
BOX 2	Curtis, George William, 1875, 1948-1952, 1969, 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
	"G" miscellaneous, 1948-1949, 1967, undated

Container	*Contents*
	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, Frederick Law, Jr., 1894, 1919, 1929, 1936-1938, 1944-1949, 1957, undated
BOX 3	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
	Boston, Mass., 1879-1886, 1891-1895, 1924-1926, 1964-1965
	Brooklyn, N.Y., 1874, 1903, 1967-1969, 1973-1974
	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
	London, England, 1834, 1883, 1891, 1916, 1962
	Louisville, Ky., 1891
	New Orleans, La., 1900
	New York, N.Y.
	Articles and newspapers clippings, 1857-1860, 1875, 1880-1885, 1892, 1910, 1917, 1926-1930, 1951-1953, 1973, 1977, undated
	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

Container	*Contents*
BOX 4	Niagara, N.Y., 1879-1883, 1887-1893
	San Francisco, Calif., 1866-1869, 1886-1887, 1927, 1949, 1953, 1965, undated
	Montreal, Que., 1876-1881, 1967, undated
	Saint Catherine's, Ont., 1887
	Washington, D.C., 1941, 1953
	Yosemite, Calif., 1864-1866, 1890, 1913, 1921, 1948, 1952, 1962
	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
	Richardson, Henry Hobson, 1951, 1958, 1962, 1970-1972
	Riotte, Charles N., 1949
	Robinson, William, 1948-1951
	Russel[l?] [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)

Container	*Contents*
	"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,

Container	*Contents*
	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	Andrew, G. L.-Wolfe, C. L.
	Pump-Zoo specimens
	Unclassified
	Author and recipient index
	Author
	Abbot, T. C.-Olmsted, Frederick Erskine
	Olmsted, Frederick Law (incomplete)
BOX 6	Olmsted firms
	Olmsted, Frederick Law, Jr.-Zimmerman, Charles D.
	Unidentified
	Recipient
	Abbott, C. F.-Young, Mason
	Unidentified
BOX 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
BOX 8	1860, Jan. 4-1862, July 26
	1863, Feb. 17-Dec. 31

Container	*Contents*
BOX 9	1864
	Sept. 24-Dec. 30
	Jan. 1-Sept. 23
	1865, Jan. 1-1895, Oct. 13
	1921, Feb. 18
BOX 10	1862, July 25-1863, Feb. 16

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 Meteorological Society
- 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