Olmsted in Buffalo & Niagara: Selected Sources at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library

[Scene in Delaware Park], circa 1900.
The George Nathan Newman Photograph Collection
Rare Book Room

Key
* = Oversized Book
Buffalo = Buffalo Collection
GRO = Grosvenor Collection
NON-FICT = Non-Fiction
MEDIA = Located in the Media Room
*RBR = Rare Book Room, appt. needed
Ref. = Reference book, may not be borrowed
Stacks = Located in Closed Stacks, ask for retrieval

Grosvenor Room
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library
1 Lafayette Square
Buffalo, NY 14203
(716) 858-8900
www.buffalolib.org
July 2013
TABLE OF CONTENTS

What does this guide cover.................................................................2
Olmsted in Buffalo..................................................................................3
Books: General Works on Olmsted.........................................................5
Books: Buffalo & Niagara Projects.........................................................6
Local History File.....................................................................................8
Maps........................................................................................................9
Media: DVDs..........................................................................................10
Newspapers............................................................................................10
Journals & Periodicals...........................................................................10
Photographs & Illustrations.................................................................10
Scrapbooks..............................................................................................11
Selected Websites..................................................................................11
Vertical Files..........................................................................................11
Online Catalog & Search Terms............................................................12
Where Else Can I Research Frederick Law Olmsted in Buffalo?...............12

What does this guide cover?

This resource guide focuses on selected sources that describe, illustrate, or document Frederick
Law Olmsted's park projects and legacy in Buffalo.

Olmsted's Buffalo influence goes beyond parkland, as he designed many other projects in WNY.
Most notable are the grounds of the New York State Asylum for the Insane (the Richardson-
Olmsted Complex).

This guide focuses on Olmsted Parks and Parkways in Buffalo and Niagara Falls.

Most of the items listed are in the Grosvenor Room's Buffalo Collection; these are reference items
and must be used in the room. Circulating copies of some books may be found in the Non-fiction
section of the Central Library or at another BECPL branch.

Biographical material on Olmsted is shelved in the Non-fiction section of the Central Library. FL
Olmsted's writings on non-park subjects are also held in the Library collections.
Search the online catalog: http://www.buffalolibrary.org/vufind/

*Please note:
Items in the RBR (Rare Book Room) must be viewed by appointment. Please call 716-858-8900.
Olmsted in Buffalo

Buffalo’s parks represent one of the largest bodies of work by master landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and his partner, Calvert Vaux. Designed between 1868 and 1896, the Olmsted portions of the Buffalo park system are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Original Park and Parkway System:

Parks and Pleasure Grounds:
- The Park (now Delaware Park)
- The Front (now Front Park)
- The Parade (redesigned by Olmsted as Humboldt Park in 1896, now Martin Luther King, Jr. Park)

Park Approaches

Parkways:
- Humboldt Parkway (lost to the Kensington Expressway)
- Lincoln Parkway
- Chapin Parkway
- Bidwell Parkway
- The Avenue (now Richmond Avenue)
- Porter Avenue
- Fillmore Avenue (partially completed, removed from Parks Board control and opened to commercial use in 1906)

Circles and Places:
- The Circle (now Symphony Circle)
- Soldier’s Place (now Soldier’s Circle)
- Bidwell Place (now Colonial Circle)
- Chapin Place (now Gates Circle, central portion redesigned in 1902 by Green & Wicks)
- Agassiz Place (now Agassiz Circle, heavily modified with the center island lost)
- Ferry Street Circle (at Richmond Avenue, center island restored in 2002)
- “The Bank” (at Niagara, Wadsworth and Sixth (now Busti Ave.) Sts. and Massachusetts Ave. (lost)

Smaller Grounds:
- Prospect Hill Parks (now Prospect and Columbus Parks)

Continued on next page…
Olmsted in Buffalo

Later Olmsted-designed additions to the system:

Minor Parks:
- Day’s Park
- The Terrace (lost)
- Masten Place (lost)
- Bennett Place (later Bennett Park, now lost)

Southern Parks:
- South Park
- Cazenovia Park
- [Heacock Park (pre-existing park, not designed by Olmsted)]

Southern Park Approaches: (conceptual design by Olmsted, implemented by Buffalo Parks Board staff)

Southern Parkways:
- South Side Parkway (now McKinley Parkway)
- Red Jacket Parkway

Southern Circles:
- Woodside Circle (now McClellan Circle)
- South Side Circle (now McKinley Circle, partially constructed, completed in 2002)

Northern Parks:
- Riverside Park

Northern Parkways: (conceptual design by Olmsted, partially implemented by Buffalo Parks Board staff)
- Scajaquada Parkway (lost)
- Roesch Avenue (not constructed)

This list adapted from http://www.olmstedinbuffalo.com/ by Stanton M. Broderick.

Niagara Falls

Olmsted also helped re-establish Niagara Falls as a natural scenic area. He led the “Free Niagara” movement, which called for New York State to buy back all the private land on American side of the falls, and preserve it for scenic public use. The “Niagara Reservation,” known today as the Niagara Falls State Park became the first state park in the nation in 1885.
# Books: General Works on Olmsted

Books are listed in call number order. The items in the Grosvenor Room (Buffalo Collection & GRO) cannot be borrowed. In some cases, a circulating copy of a particular title is available. Some items are stored in Closed Stacks and must be retrieved by staff, which takes about 10 minutes.

| Buffalo HT167 .O44  
Olmsted, Frederick Law, 1822-1903.  
Civilizing American cities: A selection of Frederick Law Olmsted's writings on city landscapes.  
| --- | --- |
| Buffalo SB470.O5 A2 1977 Vol. 7  
Olmsted, Frederick Law  
Parks, politics, and patronage 1874-1882.  
The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted.  
| Buffalo SB470.O5 A3 1997 Vol.1  
Olmsted, Frederick Law  
Writings on public parks, parkways, and park systems  
The papers of Frederick Law Olmsted. Supplementary series  
Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, c1997- | Olmsted’s reports on plans for parks in North America: why parks are crucial in city life and how they should be managed. Covers many Buffalo projects. |
| Buffalo SB470.O5 B48 1987  
The master list of design projects of the Olmsted firm, 1857-1950.  
New York, N.Y.: National Association for Olmsted Parks in conjunction with the Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks, 1987. | List of all projects in America, by location. Indicates if records can be found at the Library of Congress. |
| Buffalo SB470.O5 F32  
Fabos, Julius Gy  
Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.: Founder of landscape architecture in America  
| Buffalo SB470.O5 M37 2011  
Martin, Justin  
Genius of place : The life of Frederick Law Olmsted  
| Buffalo SB470.O5 T69  
Olderr, Steven  
Toward a comprehensive bibliography of the landscaping and architectural work of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux…  
Riverside, Ill.: Riverside Public Library, c1982. | A list of sources for further Olmsted & Vaux research, Buffalo & beyond. |

Further biographies and general works on Olmsted can be found by searching the online catalog with the subject of: Olmsted, Frederick Law

## Books: Buffalo & Niagara Projects

Books are listed in call number order. The items in the Grosvenor Room (Buffalo Collection & GRO) cannot be borrowed. In some cases, a circulating copy of a particular title is available. Some items are stored in Closed Stacks and must be retrieved by staff, which takes about 10 minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRO microfilm cabinet</th>
<th>Photocopies from microfilm. Includes Olmsted’s original letters and writings on Buffalo, some newspaper articles, published reports.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books: Buffalo &amp; Niagara Projects</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buffalo F129.B87 F76 1996</strong></td>
<td>Front Park planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales, Brad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response to the proposed January 1996 master plan for The Front</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Buffalo, N.Y.: Lower West Side Resources and Development Corp.], 1996.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buffalo F129.B87 O46 2008</strong></td>
<td>History of park system, modern issues and plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shibley, Robert G.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Olmsted city: the Buffalo Olmsted park system: Plan for the 21st century.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Buffalo, N.Y.]: Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, [2008]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo Friends of Olmstead Parks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parks report. Newsletter of the Buffalo Friends of Olmsted Parks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo, N.Y.: BFOP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buffalo NA737.V4 K68 1998</strong></td>
<td>Focuses on Vaux; includes work in Buffalo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowsky, Francis R.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country, park &amp; city : the architecture and life of Calvert Vaux</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The best planned city: The Olmsted legacy in Buffalo.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo, N.Y: Buffalo State College Foundation, 1991</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowsky, F. R.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The best planned city in the world: Olmsted, Vaux, and the Buffalo park system.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amherst : University of Massachusetts Press ; Library of American Landscape History, [2013]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buffalo SB470.O5 S63 2011</strong></td>
<td>Images, plans, maps of major Buffalo parks and Niagara Falls and Niagara Reservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schneekloth, Lynda H., Robert Shibley, and Thomas Yots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Olmsted in Buffalo and Niagara</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buffalo SB470.O5 O36 1979</strong></td>
<td>Detailed information on major parks and parkways. B&amp;W images and maps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Donnell, Patricia Marie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survey of Buffalo's Olmsted Parks : summer 1979, for National Register of Historic Places nomination</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Buffalo (N.Y.). Park Commission.]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preliminary Report respecting a public park in Buffalo...authorizing its establishment.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo : Printing House of Matthews &amp; Warren, 1869</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buffalo SB483.B9 A2</strong></td>
<td>Early years include Olmsted’s written plans, maps &amp; plans, financial information, and progress of early parks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>[Buffalo Park Annual Reports] 1870-1914</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo: Press of the Courier Company, 1871-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Books: Buffalo & Niagara Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISBN</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
**Minutes of the Buffalo Board of Parks Commissioners. 1898** 
[Buffalo (N.Y.). Park Commission, 1898] | Information on parks, related projects, structures, individuals, and even zoo animals in 1898.                                       |
**Locations, data, divisions and dimensions of the parks, parkways, and minor places.** 
Buffalo: Bureau of Recreations, 1923. | 1923 Statistical information on parks and recreational areas.                                                                             |
**The Bureau of Parks: A survey of the administration of the Bureau of parks of the Department of parks and public buildings of Buffalo, N.Y.** 
[Buffalo, N.Y., Buffalo Municipal Research Bureau, Inc., 1927] | 1927 Statistical information on the parks and recreational areas.                                                                             |
| Buffalo SB483.B9 D4 | Buffalo (N.Y.). Dept. of Community Development 
**Delaware Park comprehensive development plan: Summary report** 
| Buffalo SB483.B9 D44 | Wendell Design: Buffalo, N.Y. 
**Interim report on the Ring Road circulation for the Delaware Park Master Plan: Buffalo NY, December, 1991** 
| Buffalo SB483.B9 K68 1987 | Kowsky, Francis R. 
**Municipal parks and city planning: Frederick Law Olmsted’s Buffalo Park and Parkway system.** 

## Local History File

This is a card index of newspaper and periodical articles, books, and other resources. Covers people, places, and events in the Buffalo area. Search under these headings:

- Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy
- Niagara Falls – Parks
- Olmsted, Frederick L.
- Parks – General
- Parks – [Specific Name]
- Parks -- History
- Parks -- New York State
- Vaux, Calvert
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maps</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stacks 33M-9&lt;br&gt;Olmsted, Frederick Law&lt;br&gt;Study of plan for improvement of Niagara Square [n.p., 1875?]</td>
<td>Published in the Fifth Annual report of Buffalo Park Commissioners, January 1875. Niagara Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRO 33M-13&lt;br&gt;Revised plan for the North Street Circle [Buffalo, N.Y. : Warren, Johnson &amp; Co. , 1875].</td>
<td>North Street Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRO 33M-18&lt;br&gt;Olmsted's sketch map of Buffalo showing the relation of the park system to the general plan of the city Buffalo, N.Y., Matthews, Northrup &amp; Co., Engrs. &amp; Prs., [1874]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*RBR 33M-18A&lt;br&gt;Olmsted's sketch map of Buffalo showing the relation of the park system to the general plan of the city Buffalo, Matthews, Northrup &amp; Co., Engrs. &amp; Prs., [1881]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRO 34M-193&lt;br&gt;City of Buffalo. Park Commission plan for additions to the Front F.L. Omsted and Co., Dec. 1891.</td>
<td>Front Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacks 35M-85&lt;br&gt;Buffalo Olmsted Park System map &amp; guide [Buffalo, N.Y.]: Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, 2005?</td>
<td>Sheet map; includes brief history of Frederick Law Olmsted and the Buffalo Parks System plus maps of the city and various parks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacks 37M-13&lt;br&gt;Design map of South Park [Buffalo] City of Buffalo Park Commission, 1888.</td>
<td>South Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacks 39M-18&lt;br&gt;General plan for the improvement of the Niagara Reservation, 1887</td>
<td>Removed from: General plan for the improvement of the Niagara Reservation, 1887. Niagara Falls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many reproductions of maps and plans can also be found in the books listed in this guide.
### Media: DVDs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Media Room in the Central library, and other BECPL branches: <a href="http://www.buffalolib.org/vufind/">http://www.buffalolib.org/vufind/</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examines Olmsted's impact on the development of America's first great city parks. Told in large part through Olmsted's own words, this film weaves his poignant personal story and pioneering vision with contemporary footage of the masterpieces he left behind.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Newspapers

The *Buffalo Courier* and the *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser* frequently published full minutes or summaries of the Buffalo Board of Parks Commissioners meetings.

For other newspaper articles, see the **Local History File** for citations, **Scrapbooks** for articles, **Vertical Files** for miscellaneous recent articles, and the *Buffalo News* online database for articles 1989 to the present.

### Journals & Periodicals

Older periodicals are shelved in Closed Stacks; please see a librarian for assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Title/Dates</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Photographs & Illustrations

Images & a few photographs circa 1900 can be found in: **Vertical File/Photo File: Parks**

Images circa 1900 will be found in the books listed in our [Buffalo Illustrations](http://www.buffalolib.org/content/grosvenor/guides-publications#12) guide:

Continued on next page...

The **Buffalo History Museum** possesses the largest collection of photographs relating to the Buffalo parks and the individuals who played key roles in their design and construction.

**Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy** has a digital collection of postcards & other images: [http://www.nyheritage.org/collections/buffalo-olmsted-parks-postcards-stereo-views](http://www.nyheritage.org/collections/buffalo-olmsted-parks-postcards-stereo-views)

Other institution’s collections may include photographs. See [Where else can I research…?](http://www.nyheritage.org/collections/buffalo-olmsted-parks-postcards-stereo-views)
### Scrapbooks

The Buffalo scrapbooks were compiled from 1900 to 1960, and are comprised largely of local newspaper clippings and ephemera. All are indexed in the *Local History File*. The following volumes are of particular interest to Olmsted researchers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*SB483.B9 B88 v.1-2 Parks in Buffalo</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>News articles on various parks, circa 1900-1960s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Selected Websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.bfloparks.org">www.bfloparks.org</a> Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy</td>
<td>Official website for Buffalo’s Olmsted Park System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.nps.gov/frla/olmstedarchives.htm">http://www.nps.gov/frla/olmstedarchives.htm</a> National Park System Olmsted Archives</td>
<td>Archives include plans, scale models, photographs. See finding aids and research guides.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vertical Files

Files include articles, pamphlets, and loose clippings. Ask a librarian to see the following files:

- Parks – General
- Parks – Cazenovia Park
- Parks – City Parks – with individual names (not Olmsted)
- Parks – Delaware Park
- Parks – Erie County and New York State
- Parks – Front Park
- Parks – Martin Luther King, Jr. (previously known as the Parade and Humboldt Park)
- Parks – Olmsted Park System – general information
- Parks – Olmsted Parks – Individual Names
- Parks – South Park

See also Vertical photo/image file: Parks
### Online Catalog & Search Terms

**http://elibrary.buffalolib.org/**

Our online catalog helps you find the books, magazines, CDs, videos, maps, and manuscripts owned by the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library. It includes the Grosvenor Room, all departments in the Central Library, and every town and branch library. Anyone may access it for free on the internet at the address above.

To find additional Olmsted-related items in our collection beyond those listed in this guide, try these Subject and Author searches.

- Buffalo (N.Y.) Parks.
- Buffalo (N.Y.). Dept. of Parks and Public Buildings.
- Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy.
- Olmsted, Frederick Law
- Vaux, Calvert.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where Else Can I Research Frederick Law Olmsted in Buffalo?</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy**  
84 Parkside Ave  
Buffalo, N.Y. 14214  
(716)-838-1249  
http://www.bfloparks.org/ | BOPC archives have digital copies of park plans, physical plans and drawings, photographs, and other reference materials for Buffalo’s Olmsted parks. |
| **Buffalo History Museum Research Library**  
1 Museum Court  
Buffalo, NY 14216-3199  
library@buffalohistory.org  
716.873.9644 x 306  
http://buffalohistory.org/Learn/Research-Library.aspx | Collection includes parks photographs, original plans for parks & structures, and publications. See this list for books:  
[FLOlmsted](http://buffalohistory.org/Learn/Research-Library.aspx) or  
[https://www.worldcat.org/profiles/BECHS/lists/775241](https://www.worldcat.org/profiles/BECHS/lists/775241) |
| **Buffalo State College**  
Butler Library Archives & Special Collections  
E. H. Butler Library  
1300 Elmwood Avenue  
Buffalo NY 14222  
716-878-6308  
dilanddm@buffalostate.edu  
http://bsclib01.buffalostate.edu/library/archives/ | The papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, 1777-1952. Collection consists of journals, correspondence, letterbooks, business papers, legal and financial papers, maps, drawings, reports, speeches, lectures, essays, articles, book manuscripts, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, and miscellaneous items. Numerous family papers are also included. |

Search for Olmsted works in Worldcat to discover items and collections in libraries and institutions nation-wide.

See also **Websites** for the National Park Service and the Library of Congress.