



Design with Culture: Claiming America's Landscape Heritage

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Often viewed as nostalgic and inauthentic, the work of early preservationists has frequently been underrated by modern practitioners. Rather than considering early preservation within its historical context, many modern preservationists judge their predecessors' work by contemporary standards, ultimately negating their legacy. In *Design with Culture: Claiming America's Landscape Heritage*, Charles A. Birnbaum and Mary V. Hughes present an introduction along with eight essays by well-known landscape historians that effectively argue against this diminution. By revisiting planning studies, executed works, and critical writings from the years 1890–1950, these authors uncover the holistic stewardship ethic that drove pioneering landscape preservation advocates, revealing their goal to be the imaginative transformation, as much as the conservation, of material culture.

The essays, which range from accounts of the professional contribution made by such figures as Charles Sprague Sargent and Frederick Law Olmsted to consideration of the roles played by women's clubs and New Deal government programs, portray the spirit and tenacity of the early preservationists. In their focus on the transformation of entities such as Mount Vernon and the White House, as well as the rural countryside along the Blue Ridge Parkway, early preservationists anticipated several key issues—such as tourism, ecological concerns, and vehicle access—that confront practitioners today. Birnbaum and Hughes illustrate not only the similarity of experience between early and modern landscape preservationists but also the immense impact that their decisions had and still have on our daily lives.

For landscape architects, architects, planners, amateur and professional gardeners, conservationists, preservationists, and anyone with an interest in history, travel, and national parks, *Design with Culture* will prove an indispensable resource for understanding the history of landscape preservation.

Contributors: Charles A. Birnbaum, Mary V. Hughes, Catherine Howett, Phyllis Andersen, Thomas E. Beaman Jr., Elizabeth Hope Cushing, David C. Streatfield, Cynthia Zaitzevsky, Ethan Carr, and Ian Firth

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Deborah Knight:

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