



Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted (A Merloyd Lawrence Book)

By Justin Martin

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Frederick Law Olmsted is arguably the most important historical figure that the average American knows the least about. Best remembered for his landscape architecture, from New York's Central Park to Boston's Emerald Necklace to Stanford University's campus, Olmsted was also an influential journalist, early voice for the environment, and abolitionist credited with helping dissuade England from joining the South in the Civil War. This momentous career was shadowed by a tragic personal life, also fully portrayed here.

Most of all, he was a social reformer. He didn't simply create places that were beautiful in the abstract. An awesome and timeless intent stands behind Olmsted's designs, allowing his work to survive to the present day. With our urgent need to revitalize cities and a widespread yearning for green space, his work is more relevant now than it was during his lifetime. Justin Martin restores Olmsted to his rightful place in the pantheon of great Americans.

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Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted (A Merloyd Lawrence Book) By Justin Martin Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

***Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, 10/24/11**

“Martin has succeeded brilliantly in bringing to detailed life the man he calls the greatest American most Americans have never heard of.”

***The Dirt*, 11/23/11**

Named one of the “Best Books of 2011.” “Illuminates Olmsted’s major achievements as a visionary artist, social reformer, pioneering environmentalist, and founder of the modern profession of landscape architecture...Martin paints a portrait of Olmsted as a preeminent American figure, revealing that ‘as a park maker, environmentalist, and abolitionist, Olmsted helped shape modern America.’”

***Acadiana Lifestyle*, November 2011**

“A long delayed tribute to an amazing American.”

***Louisville.com*, 10/11/11**

“*Genius of Place* has proved an unexpected and intriguing delight. And make no mistake; Martin is a master craftsman of connecting his readers to his subject. Olmsted’s life is painted in vibrant and articulate pages full of interest and sans a single paragraph of stuffiness.”

***Englewood Review of Books*, 7/14/11**

“Deep research to expose the inner life of Olmsted combined with [Martin’s] engaging writing style.”

“A comprehensive journal of Frederick Law Olmsted’s life written with great precision and exhaustive historical specifications; but these elements do not get in the way of a well-told tale...Highly recommended.”

***Chew & Digest Books*, 6/1/11**

“One of the greatest things a biographer can do is not only cover that particular person’s life, but give us an idea of the time that he or she lived in...Martin does this in spades...Enlightening.”

***Barnes and Noble Review*, 6/3/11**

“Few men have written their signature across our public spaces as vividly, personally, and influentially as Olmsted...Justin Martin's first-ever full-scale biography reveals other fascinating sides of the famed landscape designer as well, including reformer and journalist.”

***Providence Journal*, 6/5/11**

“Martin has done a fine job in presenting the life of a fascinating American.”

***Internet Review of Books*, 6/6/11**

“A welcome exception to the rule that biographies don’t make easy reading.”

***Boston Globe*, 6/16/11**

Textscape blog, 8/30/11

"More forthright...about Olmsted the man than are some of the other more hagiographic biographies."

Architect, September 2011

"Part exposé of the man, part history of Americans subduing the U.S. terra firma."

Landscape Architecture, October 2011

"Unearths insights into the park maker's troubled personal life as well as his roles as writer, social reformer, and unruly business collaborator."

Curled Up with a Good Book, 9/25/11

"Martin has a keen eye...Martin makes full use of a wealth of primary sources to bring life to his subject...To understand the man, of course, we must understand the times in which he lives. Martin incorporates the historical perspective so seamlessly that readers may not even be aware that they have been transported to 19th-century America...Olmsted's life reveals itself as naturally as his designs, integrated with the setting and exposition of this outstanding biography."

"Fascinating."

E: The Environmental Magazine, July 2011

"*Genius of Place* offers more than the legacy of a man who accomplished 'more than most people could in three lifetimes.' Martin provides an intimate portrayal of man himself, whose life was both blessed with genius and plagued by tragedy."

"The story of Olmsted's life offers today's readers an opportunity to see what effect one energetic and imaginative person had on the formation of today's nation. The author delivers this fascinating story in a prose that invites the reader to complete the book in one sitting—and then ask for more."

American History Blog, 5/8/11

"An excellent book...Martin tells Olmsted's life story in such a way as to bring the reader into Olmsted's life. It is an enjoyable read that flows smoothly. A biography is enjoyable both because the subject has led an interesting life AND because the author has presented that life in a readable way. *Genius of Place* has just that combination. I highly recommend it."

Wall Street Journal, 5/31/11

"Martin is good at shedding light on the less familiar aspects of Olmsted's life. Having written biographies of Alan Greenspan and Ralph Nader, he seems to know his way around rather remote personalities...Engaging."

Library Journal, 6/1/11

"A workmanlike biography; it adequately examines the balance between Olmsted's public and private personae."

New York Journal of Books, 5/31/11

Blogcritics.org, 7/10/11

“Provides a rich history of early America as well as the compelling life story of 19th century landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted...Rich with historical details of much of America's finest landscapes...A thoroughly enjoyable book.”

Charleston Post and Courier, 7/17/11

“Reading *Genius of Place* feels like listening to Olmsted's best friend dishing about the private life of a real person...Martin makes a convincing argument that Olmsted saw all of his work, from park-making to gold mining, as social reform. He points out the subtle ironies of Olmsted's life and provides historical and personal background without bogging the reader down or disrupting the flow of the narrative...*Genius of Place* is far more than a survey of Olmsted's creations. It's a tightly woven narrative that ties together his personal life, his many vocations and his impact on a turbulent era.”

The Dirt (the American Society of Landscape Architects blog), 7/27/11

“Illuminates Olmsted's major achievements as a visionary artist, social reformer, pioneering environmentalist, and founder of the modern profession of landscape architecture...Does not disappoint in the totality of its coverage...[Martin's] intriguing account of Olmsted's life...captures the significance of his legacy.”

Corduroy Books, 6/16/11

“A riveting and great intro to a fascinating architect not just of American places but American ideas.”

Portland Book Review (website), 6/17/11

“A well written and easy to follow biography. Justin Martin does an excellent job helping to bring this figure to life.”

Hudson Valley News, 6/15/11

“A good (and surprising) read...An intimate portrait...A fine biography of a man who helped shape modern America.”

WomanAroundTown.com, 6/5/11

“Martin reveals [Olmsted] not only as a brilliant landscape architect, but also as a dedicated Abolitionist, indulgent father, and fervent conservationist.”

Landscape Architecture magazine, July 2011

“Exhaustively researched and clearly written, this volume should become the standard for students of both history and design.”

Seattle Times, 6/26/11

“Absorbing...Lively...Olmsted's life story is fabulous biographical material, and Martin largely makes the most of it. In a brisk, unvarnished style, he artfully balances Olmsted's achievements with his personal limitations.”

Examiner.com, 6/29/11

GreenBookReviews.ca (Canada), 7/25/11

“In lush detail, Martin walks the reader through the chapters of Olmsted's life...With the fine grain research

skills of an experienced biographer, Martin succeeds in shining light on the combination of vision and accident, values and necessity that led to Olmstead's career in landscape architecture."

Reference and Research Book News, August 2011

"Martin takes on the extraordinarily multifaceted life and career of the man known for his design of Central Park but whose legacy reaches far deeper and wider."

Christian Science Monitor, 8/29/11

"Martin does an excellent job of tracing the development of this multitalented genius and—by the book's end—makes a powerful case for Olmsted as a reformer who not only created some of the world's most beautiful parkland but also helped to shape our lives and public spaces as we know them today."

Sacramento Book Review, August 2011

"Not only a great portrait of the man, but a portrait of a period in American history."

Kirkus Reviews, 4/15/11

"The remarkable story of America's first, and still foremost, landscape architect...Martin helps explain the driven, artistic temperament that informed the famed landscapes. He persuasively casts Olmsted as essentially a social reformer whose passion for meaningful work found its most complete expression in the creation of public spaces intended for the enjoyment of all. A revealing look at a still-underappreciated giant whose work touches posterity more intimately and more delightfully than many of his distinguished Civil War-era contemporaries."

Niagara Gazette, 4/16/11

"A full-scale biography."

The Daily Green, 4/29/11

"[A] straightforward and enjoyable book...Reading this book, you get a full picture of the man, a man frustratingly immature and coddled for so many years, a man struck by personal tragedies...and ultimately a man whose achievements warrant a full-length biography."

Red Weather Review, 5/1/11

"A nicely rounded portrait...This lively rendering of 'a hard man' who created beauty should have wide appeal."

Publishers Weekly, web-exclusive 5/16/11

"[A] wide-ranging, surprisingly revealing biography...Martin brings the Hartford-born Olmsted to life...An eye-opening, much-needed biography of a man whose work continues to inspire...Illuminating."

The Daily, 6/12/11

"Rich and meticulously-researched, Justin Martin's biography makes a convincing case for Olmsted as 'The most important American historical figure that the average person knows the least about.'"

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot, 6/12/11

"[A] fascinating new biography."

Rocky Mountain Land Library, 6/13/11

“Olmsted designed more than thirty major city parks, the U.S. Capitol grounds, several university campuses, and many planned communities. But there’s much more to Olmsted’s life, as Justin Martin’s *Genius of Place* makes abundantly clear...A rich story of a remarkable life.”

InfoDad, 6/16/11

“Packed with information gleaned from primary sources...Will certainly captivate not only those interested in Olmsted as landscape architect but also people who want to know about early environmentalism and the conservationist movement—and the intricacies of creating open spaces in and near many of the nation’s great cities.”

“[An] ardent biography...Martin presents Olmsted's era in all its glory, with the intimate affairs and staggering accomplishments of the great man unfolding against the vivid backdrop of 19th-century America.”

Manhattan magazine, June 2011

“This biography of the landscape designer who stamped Manhattan green shows him to be a troubled idealist who had an unlucky personal life, but who nonetheless shaped some of the most important public spaces in America.”

Buffalo News, 5/13/11

“Olmsted led one of the most productive and influential lives in American history, yet owing to the diffusiveness of his early ventures and the nature of his principal legacy, landscape architecture, he has never attained the name recognition of some of his more singularly focused peers. Justin Martin's engaging new biography will help to change that perception...A fast-moving and fascinating narrative of the life of one of America's great visionary figures.”

Roanoke Times, 5/15/11

Choice, October 2011

“[A] readable, chatty book...[This] biography succeeds in portraying a seminal character whose life strongly influenced the way people experience urban space in contemporary America.”

Flourish, Fall 2011

“[Martin’s] thorough original research in personal letters, journals and contemporary news articles slowly reveals pieces of Olmsted’s puzzling life. Martin painstakingly places Olmsted’s accomplishments in a detailed historical context...Well-written.”

Alaska Airlines Magazine, September 2011

“[A] compelling biography.”

Leaflet (e-newsletter of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society), September 2011

“A page-turner of a biography, which follows the ascendancy of a man who follows one dream after another, leaving a tangible, enduring legacy for a nation.”

Forest Hills Garden News, September 2011

“A delightful 400 page read...[Martin] draws the reader into the rhythm of FLO’s various life stages, and what a journey it is...*Genius of Place* is able to make readers care as much about the play-by-play in FLO’s private life as the color commentary around his public roles—and this is no small feat.”

About the Author

Justin Martin, author of highly praised biographies of Alan Greenspan and Ralph Nader, lives in Forest Hills Gardens, New York, an enclave of New York City designed by Olmsted's son.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

David Long:

This *Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (A Merloyd Lawrence Book) book is not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you get by reading this book is information inside this publication incredible fresh, you will get data which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. This particular *Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (A Merloyd Lawrence Book) without we know teach the one who reading it become critical in pondering and analyzing. Don't always be worry *Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (A Merloyd Lawrence Book) can bring whenever you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it in the lovely laptop even cellphone. This *Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (A Merloyd Lawrence Book) having great arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

Mary Goldstein:

Precisely why? Because this *Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (A Merloyd Lawrence Book) is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap the idea but latter it will surprise you with the secret it inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who else write the book in such remarkable way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining method but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book get such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking way. So , still want to delay having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the publication store hurriedly.

Christopher Watson:

Reading can called brain hangout, why? Because when you find yourself reading a book particularly book entitled *Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (A Merloyd Lawrence Book) the mind will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every single aspect that maybe unfamiliar for but surely can become your mind friends. Imaging every single word written in a book then become one application form conclusion and explanation in which maybe you never get previous to. The *Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (A Merloyd Lawrence Book) giving you an additional experience more than blown away your mind but also giving you useful details for your better life with this era. So now let us show you the relaxing pattern the following is your body and mind will likely be pleased when you are finished

studying it, like winning a game. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

Olivia Cook:

What is your hobby? Have you heard in which question when you got students? We believe that that problem was given by teacher for their students. Many kinds of hobby, Everyone has different hobby. Therefore you know that little person just like reading or as reading through become their hobby. You need to know that reading is very important in addition to book as to be the point. Book is important thing to add you knowledge, except your own teacher or lecturer. You see good news or update in relation to something by book. Numerous books that can you choose to use be your object. One of them are these claims Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted (A Merloyd Lawrence Book).

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