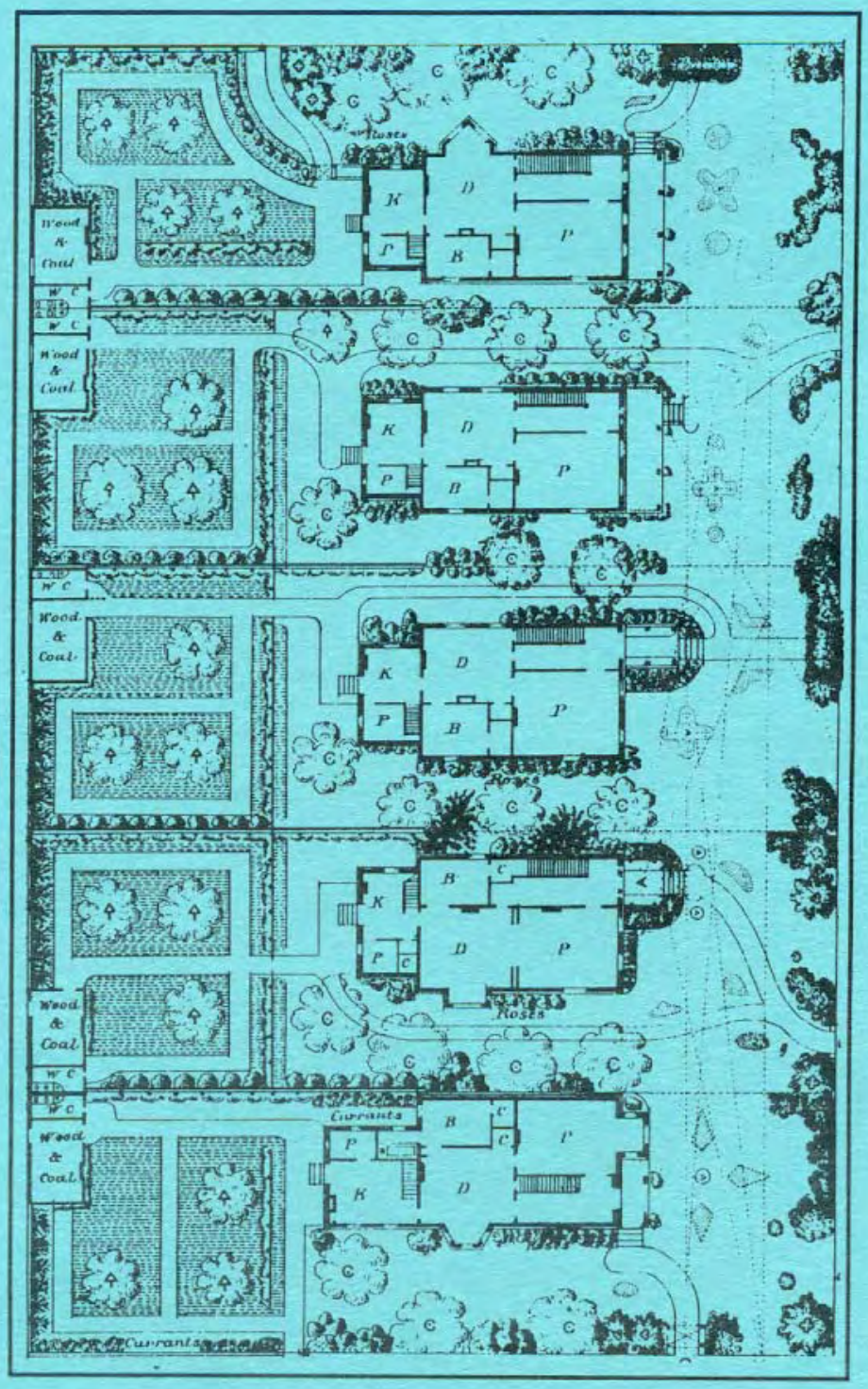
The Roots of Your Landscape

A Guide to Evaluating and Researching Vintage Landscapes around Historic Properties



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The Roots of Your Landscape

A Guide to Evaluating and Researching Vintage Landscapes around Historic Properties

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Published by
Rock Island Preservation Commission

Produced by
Planning and Redevelopment Division
Community and Economic Development Department
City of Rock Island, Illinois

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
This publication was financed in part with federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior and administered by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. However, the content and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of the Interior or the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency is an equal opportunity employer.

Published 1993. Please credit the Rock Island Preservation Commission when referencing this publication.

The Roots of Your Landscape

*M*any now realize the importance of historic preservation and the need to preserve and restore older structures. Older houses, especially, have caught the public fancy, and for good reason. Where else can you invest in so much history, waiting to be shared with so many?

Quality materials, fine workmanship, well established trees and shrubs—these are things that no amount of money can buy new. Accordingly, numerous books and articles have appeared, telling of house styles, decoration and design. Restoration know-how abounds. But as we look beyond historic houses to historic neighborhoods and the spaces that tie them together, we find a lack of suitable literature. Is not the setting for that beautiful old Queen Anne as important as the house itself? Can we fully understand and appreciate one without the other?

A hundred years ago, lawns and gardens were often as important as the house. Realizing this, many are now turning their attention to these historic landscapes. This booklet will provide a frame of reference for that work: What styles were popular? What plants? And how have they changed through time?

This booklet is not intended as a complete guide for a museum restoration. Rather, it is a starting point for those who wish to recapture the feel of an earlier landscape. The emphasis is on middle and working class families, the kind that built so much of Rock Island. It will show you how to find the roots of your home's landscape—and in doing so, give you a greater appreciation of the forces that have shaped this historical environment.

LANDSCAPE THEORY AND PRACTICE, 1830 - 1945

The Formal or Geometric Style

*W*hen the first Americans came up the Mississippi River to Rock Island, they brought with them the prevailing attitudes and fashions of the day. Most of the latter, in turn, came from Europe. This was especially true of the manner in which grounds were laid out. As a result, those of wealth were practicing the formal or geometric style of landscape design.

This style was a natural evolution of thought and theory originating with the European Renaissance. The emphasis was on straight lines, symmetry and intricate geometric patterns. Imposing mansions were invariably the focal point of a long central axis, or walk. Flanking this axis were identical geometric beds of shrubs and flowers—sometimes called parterres - all bordered by closely trimmed hedging. The main axis provided a vista through the garden. At the end might be a summer

house, settee, arbor or similar focal point. The entire garden was firmly enclosed with fence or hedge for protection and seclusion.
Only the wealthy could afford the expense and maintenance of this type of formal, elaborate garden. Full-time gardeners and helpers were the rule. Working class gardens, or grounds, on the other hand, were simpler affairs.

A straight walk made of wood, gravel or brick went from the street to the front door. Rectangular or oblong flower beds might flank the walk. Small shrubs were also used. Fruit trees were often focal points, but were more likely to be found to the rear or side of the home. A formal flower garden might also be found in these areas, but would be separated from more utilitarian spaces with screenings of hedges or vines.

At the rear of the home one would find those ubiquitous utilitarian features, like the kitchen garden, orchard, laundry yard and stable. Kitchen gardens were often done in a formal style, with plants in square or rectangular patterns with paths between. Many homes of the well-to-do along the Mississippi River had the house on the bluff facing the river. A formal garden would be to the front or side, affording agreeable views of the river valley and its commerce. Frontier Americans were especially fond of formal gardening because it meant establishing control over an otherwise uncivilized wilderness.

The Naturalistic Style

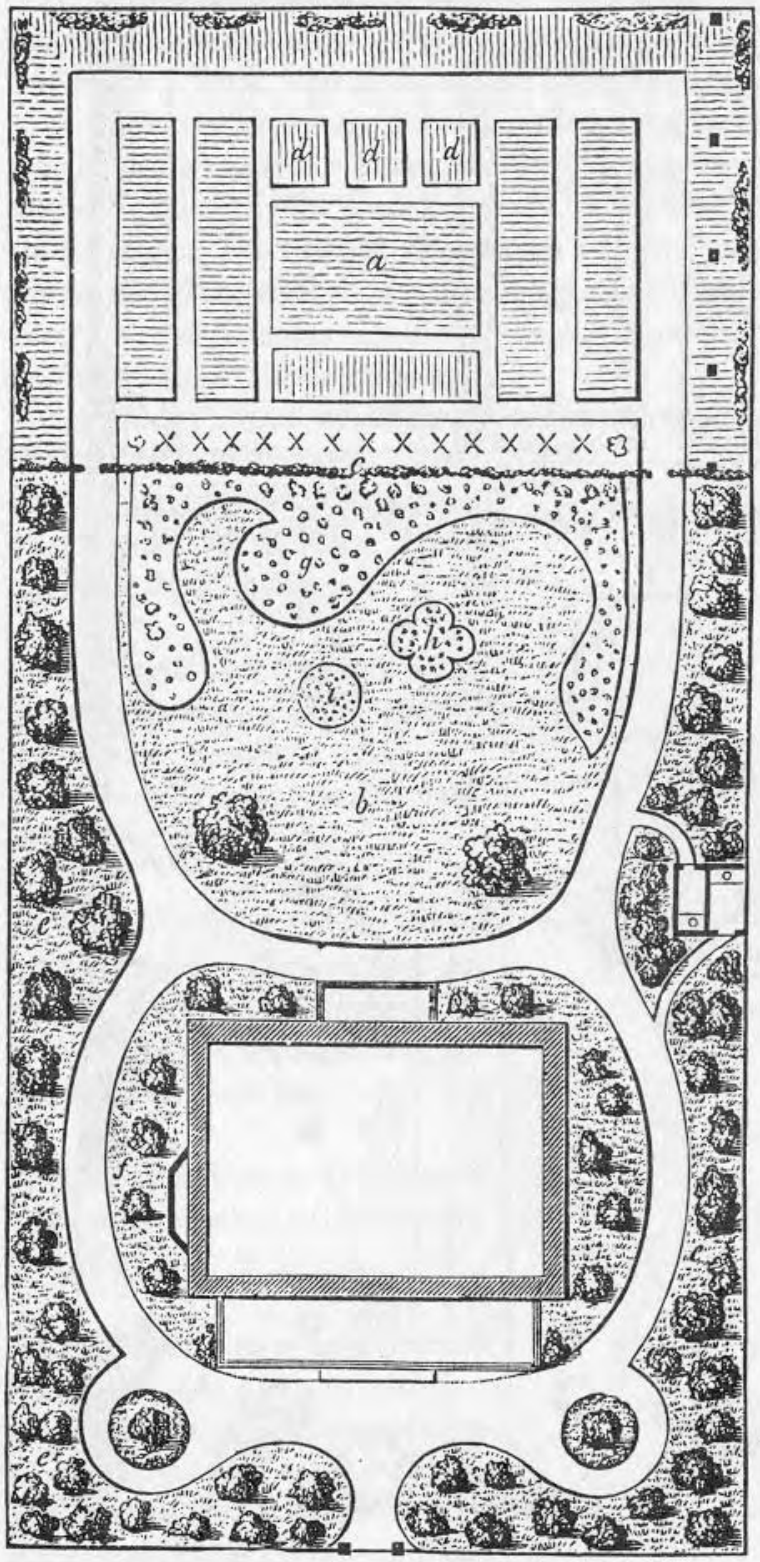
A reaction against the excesses of the formal gardens and of man's total control over nature was only a matter of time, if not of fashion. It began with English landscape painters in the 18th century, who felt that nature was inherently good, and was to be imitated. The new style in America was popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing, whose book, Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, became a best seller. This work, first published in 1841, became the standard reference work for the remainder of the century.

Downing banished straight lines and formal beds in favor of curving walks and drives combined with naturalistic groupings of trees and shrubs. Nature—as envisioned in a painting—was to be imitated, but only up to a point.

A park-like setting, with open lawn spaces, was emphasized. "Vistas" were created, which enhanced the views to and from the house. Clumps of trees or shrubs were placed with the largest to the rear, shortest to the front. A seat, arbor or summerhouse might be placed amidst a grove or a long vista. Where a walk split, or flanking the front of a house, might be found a large urn or two, sometimes filled with flowers. Specimen plantings—a single planting of a rare or unusual tree or shrub—were encouraged in open spaces where all could view the beauty of these new horticultural acquisitions. Downing, perhaps because of a developing national pride, also emphasized the use of native trees and shrubs.

Flower beds were free to wander, preferably to an open, sunny space, where their colors and cheerful nature could properly be admired. While earlier beds were a mix of flowers, and even small shrubs, Downing came to recommend

the simple, single species beds, preferably with everblooming annuals. These beds were often in various "cookie cutter" shapes. By combining a variety of beds in an open sun-lit space along a walk or drive, a striking display of color could be added to an otherwise "naturalistic" setting.

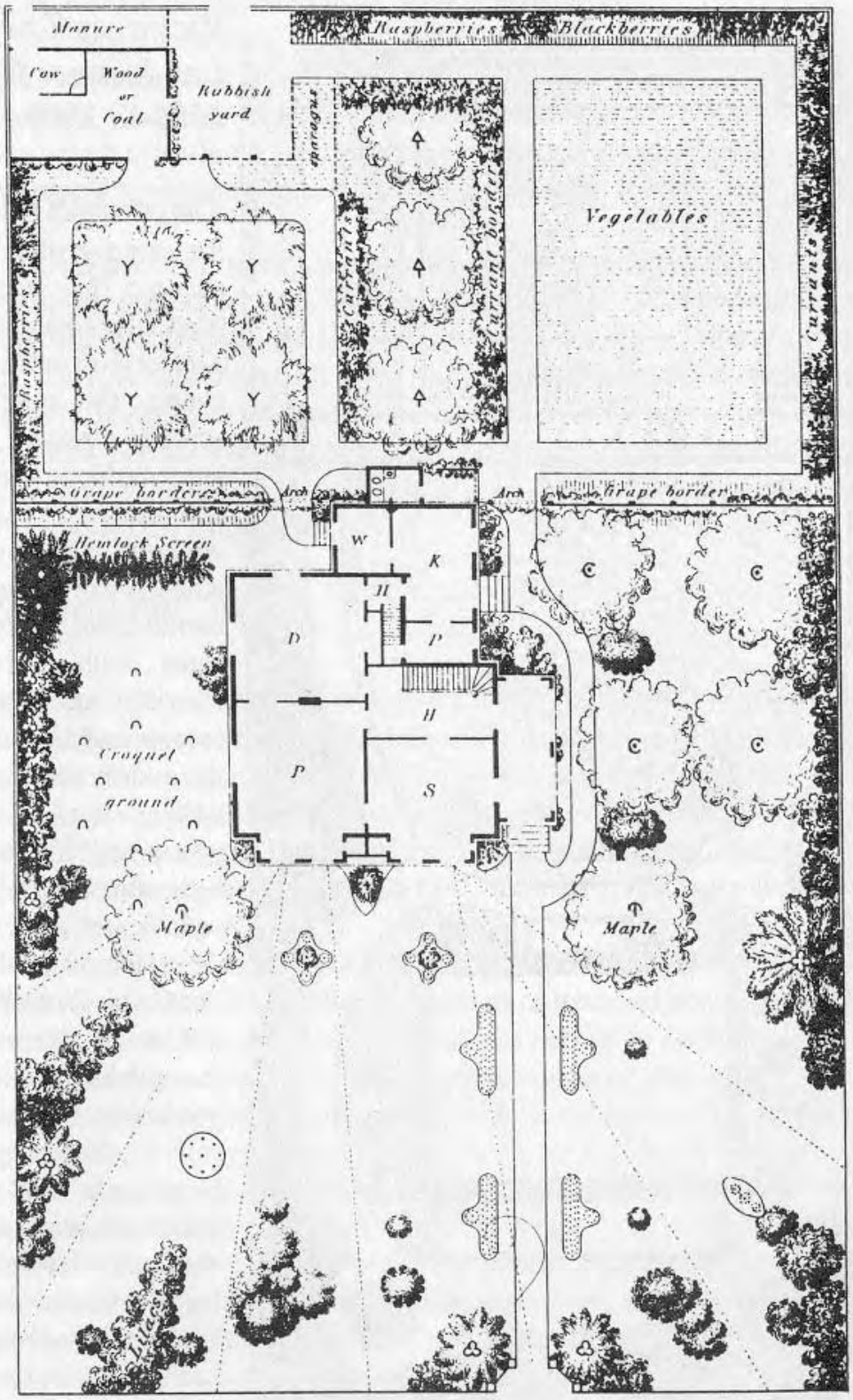


Andrew Jackson Downing's "naturalistic" plan for grounds of "small extent."

Victorian Era Landscapes from 1865 to 1900

The principles of Downing were overwhelmingly adopted by wealthier Rock Island residents. As a major river port and rail center, the town was quickly exposed to the latest fashions and technologies. A strong local economy encouraged employment and a rising middle class. Better educated with increasing amounts of disposable income and leisure time, the middle class became willing recipients of advances in architecture and horticulture. As federal style homes gave way to Greek Revival, Italianate, and Gothic Revival, more and more interest was given to landscaping and horticultural pursuits.

Downing was particularly fond of the Italianate and Gothic styles of architecture. He had divided the naturalistic style of landscape gardening into two forms, i.e. the beautiful and the picturesque. The former emphasized gentle,



Frank J. Scott's plan for "suburban home grounds." Dotted lines represent desired lines of sight. Note croquet grounds, something recommended for every Victorian home.

rounded curves and types of vegetation—good for the Italianate style of architecture. The Picturesque, however, emphasized bold, craggy, sharp angles and lines and was recommended for Gothic houses. A round-headed oak was beautiful, but the sharp, angular Norway Spruce was the perfect tree for the picturesque setting.

Americans wanted guidance, however, on laying out grounds of smaller extent. This void was filled by a number of landscape gardeners—as they were then called—who followed in Downing's footsteps. Few achieved more recognition than Frank J. Scott, who published his Suburban Home Grounds in 1870.

Scott emphasized "decorative gardening," another variation of the naturalistic landscape school. Some called it "gardenesque," a term borrowed from England's most popular garden writer, J.C. Loudon. Loudon explained it as "that kind of scenery best calculated to display the individual beauty of trees, shrubs and plants...the smoothness and greenness of the lawns; and the smooth surfaces, curved direction...and firmness of walks; in short, the gardenesque style is calculated for displaying the art of the gardener."

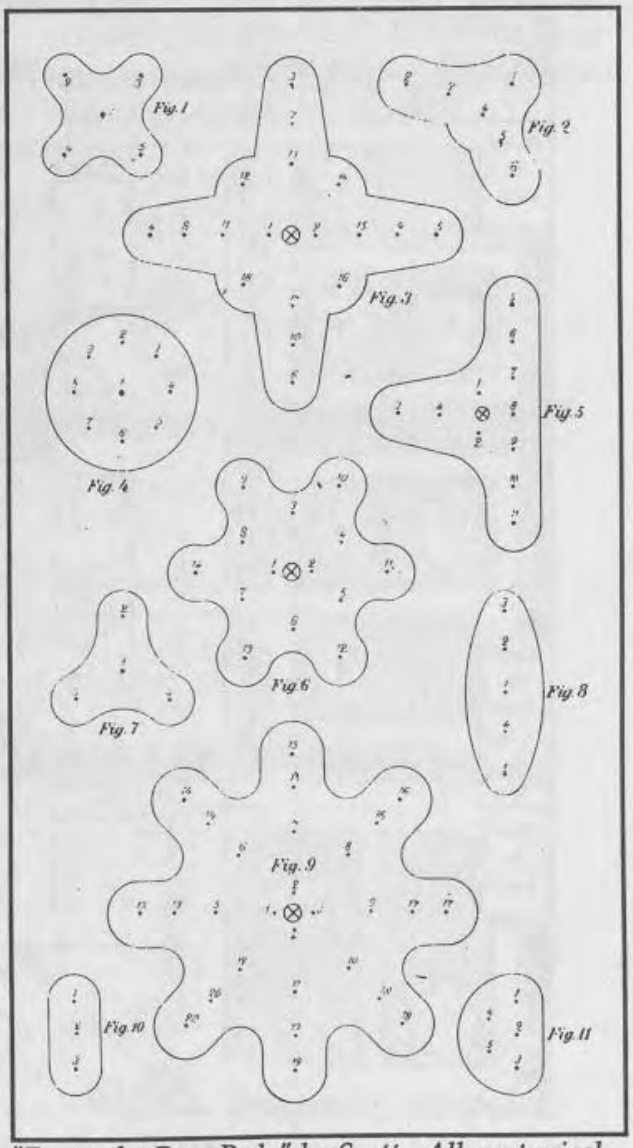
Scott's book provided small suburban lot owners with a host of plans, many of them ahead of their time. Some of Scott's recommendations were heavily adopted in Rock Island, including the following:

1) Front yards were for public view. They were not to be hidden behind fences (this happened only after stray livestock disappeared and the auto replaced the horse).

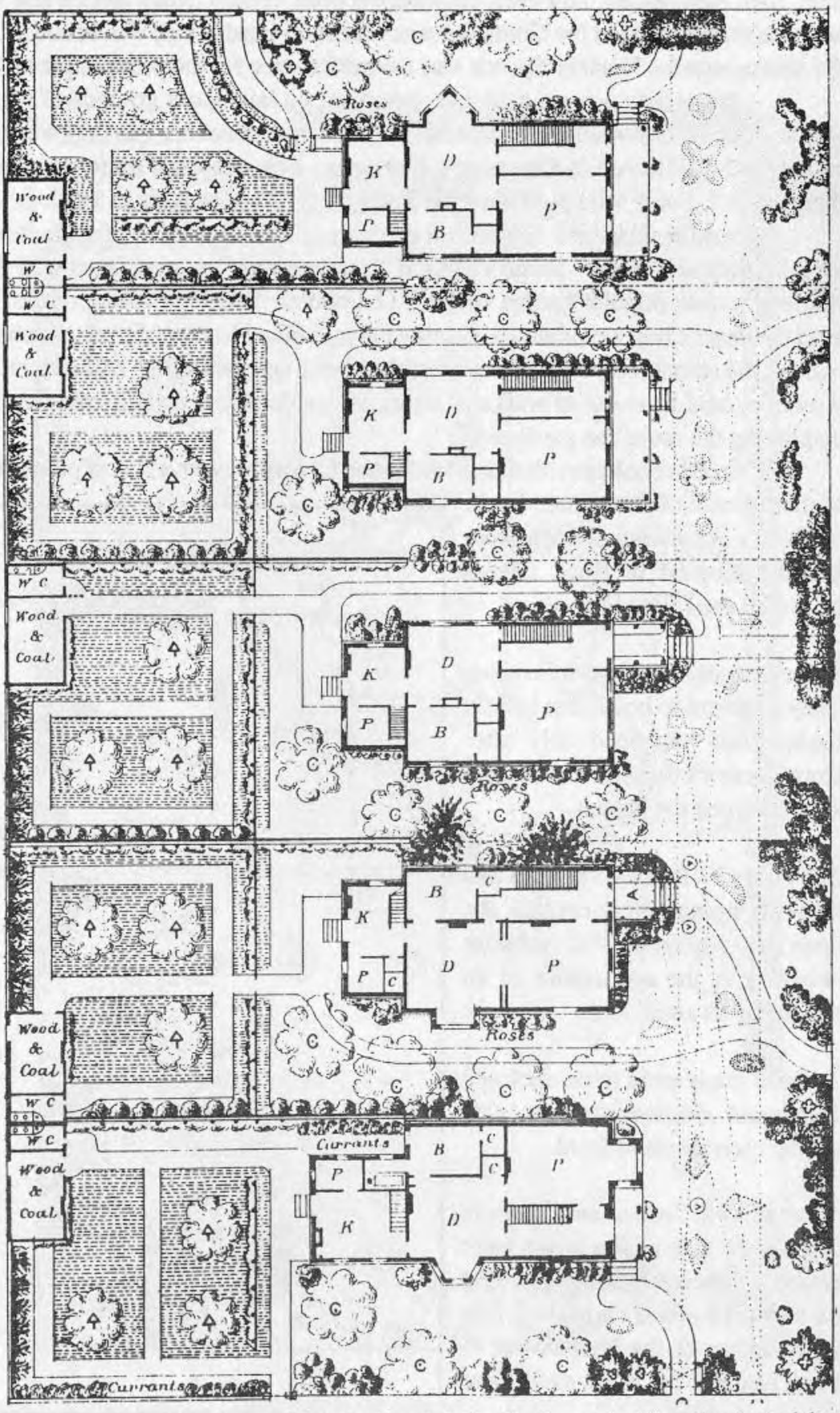
2) "Vistas," - framed views to and from the home - were created. An open view past one side of the house helped give the appearance of an extension on small lots.

3) Open areas were to be enclosed with border plantings of shrubs, with shorter perennials in front.

4)Expanses of "velvet lawn" in front and to one side of the home were desired. Specimen plantings might be observed—or a carpet bed (the introduction of the lawnmower to Rock Island in the 1870s made these lawns possible).



"Forms for Rose Beds" by Scott. All are typical of the late Victorian period.



Recommended plans for small lots by Frank J. Scott. Carpet bedding dominated front lawns.

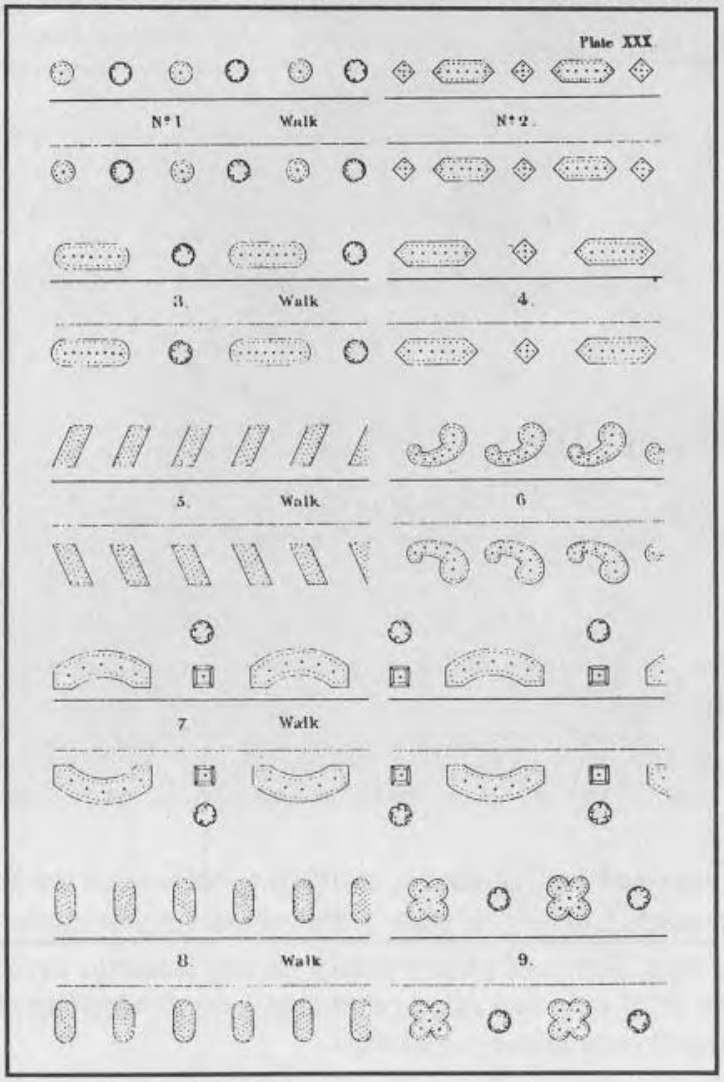
5) Carpet beds—colorful beds of uniform size, shape, color; often placed on a mound, slope or around some garden ornament for better effect. (Tropical plants were encouraged—a favorite consisted of concentric circles with the tallest in the middle, i.e., a castor bean surrounded by cannas, caladiums, coleus, and then marigolds).

6) Side and rear yards were kept for privacy and personal enjoyment. Fences, hedges, screening were encouraged. More open lawn space was provided for specimen plantings of trees, shrubs, flowers—or a game of the newly popular croquet).

7) More shrubbery was planted around the house foundation, with larger shrubs for the corners, ell, and either side of the porch.

8) Verdant vines decorated the porch, trellises, and arbors. The home became part of the landscape; the lawn became an extension of the parlor.

9) Decorative ornaments such as sparing use of urns filled with colorful flowers, were placed on either side of the porch steps, where a walk split, or where the eye might be drawn; hanging baskets were filled with flowers for the porch or gazebo; trellises and arbors guided one to another space; settees were placed in a secluded (rear or side yard) vista; and possibly a gazebo was used as the focal point of a flower garden, or secluded space providing that vista.



"Forms for Carpet Bedding" by Scott. Brightly colored annuals were especially desirable.

Commerce, Technology and the Golden Age of Horticulture

Downing, Scott and others were part of an age when things new and novel excited the imagination. In a few short decades, a rising middle class suddenly had access to books, houses, furniture and plants of all kinds.

Rock Island was no exception. As early as 1848, the Davenport and Rock Island Horticultural Society had been established. Premiums were awarded for the best plants and gardens in various categories. A major part of this early process was the rise of the nursery industry, which further encouraged the exposure to—and adoption of—new and unusual trees, shrubs and flowers. Rock Island residents couldn't seem to get enough of them. Anything tender and exotic was much in demand,

Rock Island Nursery

MR. HARES has made sale of 13,000 trees of various kinds during the past week, for which he has received some two thousand dollars. The purchasers had visited all the other nurseries in this region and were perfectly satisfied as to the superiority of his stock and the moderate prices demanded. This speaks well for this nursery and will doubtless stimulate the proprietor to even greater exertions in this useful and pleasing branch of business.

April 26, 1854 Advertiser

APPLES, PEARS, PLUMS

AND CHERRY TREES, GRAPE Vines, Roses, Shrubs, Plants, Evergreen and Shade Trees, at Black Hawk Nursery, Rock Island, Ill. D.F. KINNEY, Prop.

April 16, 1864 Union

Moline, Illinois, Aug , 1912

M Trembley Estate
by M H Battles
. . In account with . . 15 St

Julius Staack & Sons

. . FLORISTS . .

'PHONES { Old 107 / New 8736

2702 Sixth Avenue

May 2d 2 dz geranium 3 00

Paid Aug 13-12

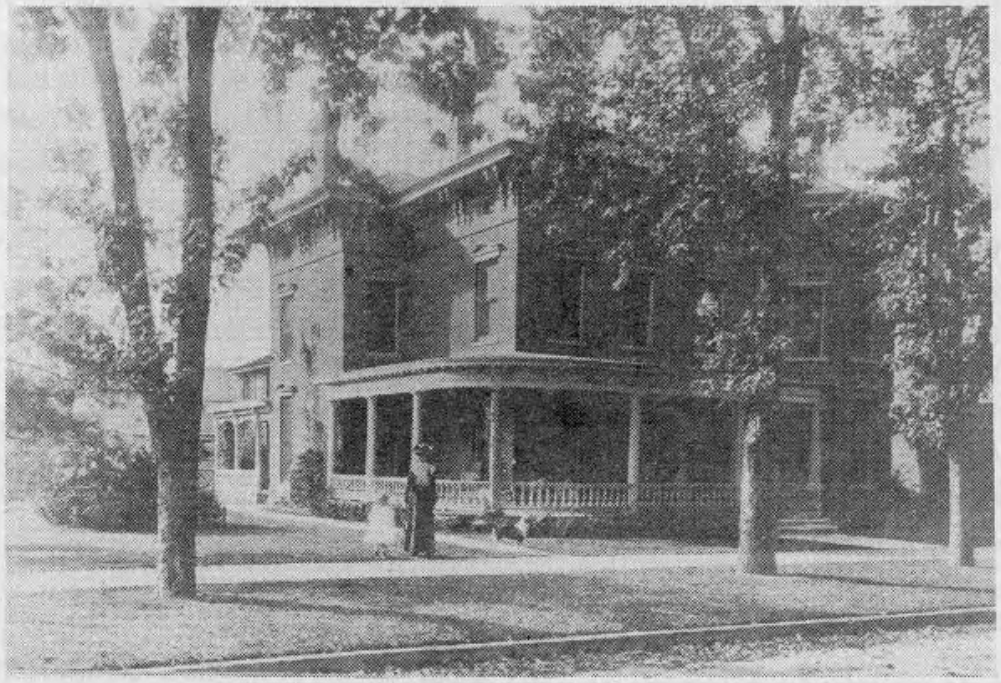
Newspaper ads typical of Rock Island and Moline's early nursery industry. Invoice from the Staack firm (started in 1876) is for two dozen geraniums, a popular bedding plant for 1912. (Source: Rock Island County Historical Society).

especially if it was imported from China or Japan. Cut-leaved, variegated, dwarf, weeping, everblooming—these were the joys of Victorian gardens.

The catalyst for much of this was often the nurseryman, who not only dispersed plants, but garden theory as well. During the last half of the 19th century, many nurseries opened in Rock Island and Moline. Mt. Holyoke, Dingeldein, Black Hawk, Nourse's, Julius Staack and the Rock Island were all nurseries active in helping to create the city's Victorian landscape. The proprietors of these establishments frequently served in the capacity of landscape architects. Relying upon the theories of Downing, Scott and others—they helped plant many of the lawns and gardens of the city according to the latest fashions.

The later Victorian period became one of excess, where homeowners competed not only with Queen Anne architecture, but also with carpet beds, cannas and cast iron furniture. By the end of the century, a reaction was setting in. There was too much gaudiness, too much complexity, too much expense. Some wanted a change.

Queen Anne home showing specimen planting of hydrangea (on the right), and Norway spruce, along with screen planting of vines on the left. Picturesque Tri-Cities, 1902.



Fries residence of Rock Island about 1902. No fences or foundation plantings, but the ubiquitous circular bed of cannas and other foliage plants dominates side yard. Picturesque Tri-Cities.

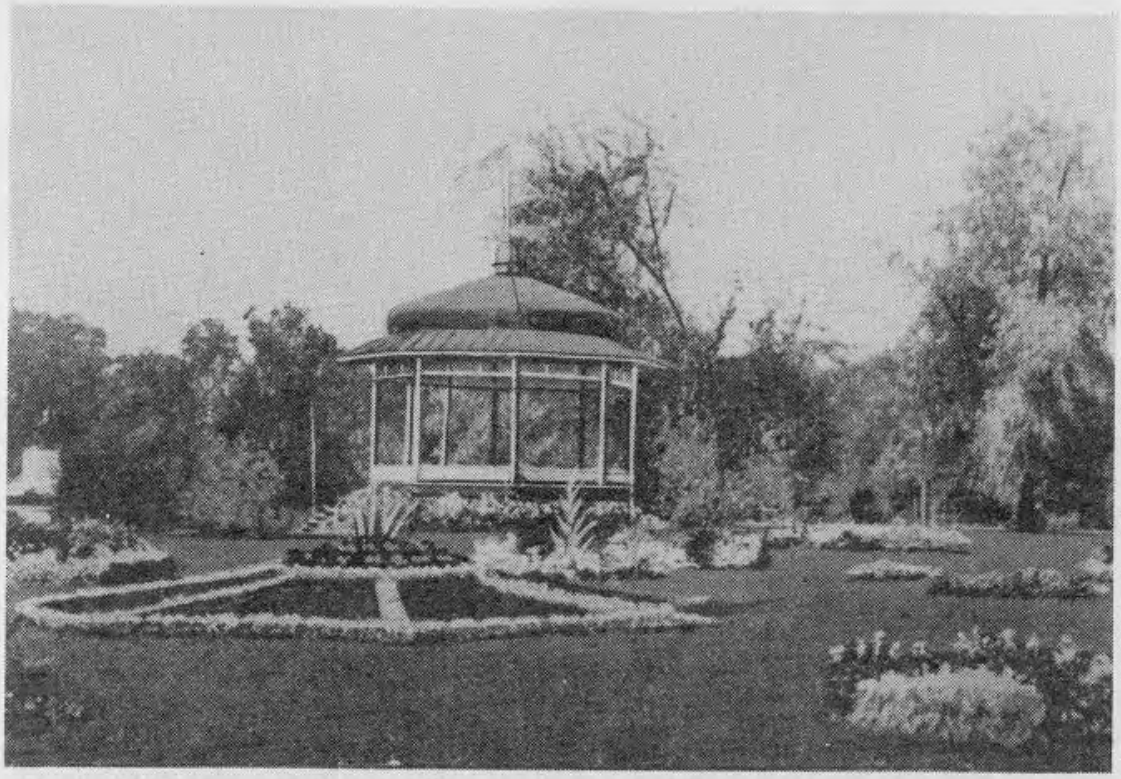
HOLLYHOCK.

DOUBLE HOLLYHOCKS.

The old-fashioned Hollyhock, now become so new-fashioned, grows its floral towers with great effect in the garden, and in an incredible variety of colors—white, scarlet, yellow, orange, crimson, rose, maroon, black and variegated. The double flowers are pretty and delicate enough to mingle with Roses and Camellias in the choicest bouquets, which fact alone shows the contrast between the Hollyhock of 30 or 40 years ago, and that of the present day, when seen in mass make a fine display.

	Each.	Per doz.
Assorted Colors	25 cts.	$2.00

Nursery catalogs were a rich source of information for gardeners. This 1883 catalogue from Hiram Sibley & Co. (Chicago) proclaims the hollyhock as "new fashioned."



Carpet bedding as practiced in Victorian America. This turn-of-the-century example was found in Crapo Park in Burlington, IA. (Source: Rock Island County Historical Society).

This couple in LeClaire, IA has adopted not only the latest in transportation modes, but also in fences. Wire/rod fences were unobtrusive yet functional. Note carriage step to left of woman. Circa 1900. (Source: Davenport Public Library).

Note potted plants on either side of front walk; these were tender -- often tropical -- plants brought out doors for the summer. This Davenport home is also well endowed with trellises and vines on the porch. Picturesque Tri-Cities, 1902.

Typical Rock Island scene from the 1890s. Rose bed on the right, terra cotta urn filled with flowers and foliage, a bed of cannas, and along the porch some bridal wreath (spirea). (Source: Rock Island County Historical Society).

A Mix of Styles from 1900-1945

After the dominance of the naturalistic style for over half a century, a more eclectic period evolved. As in architecture, older gardening styles were modernized, mixed and adapted. Larger estate owners played with the 17th century Renaissance styles, i.e., French, English, Italian. Oriental and colonial gardens were also adapted and resurrected. It was at this time, too, that the so called "herb garden" developed. Prior to this time, herbs were simply mixed in with the kitchen garden.

It was also during this time that William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll popularized the simple "cottage garden" along with deep borders of perennials designed for color and effect throughout the season. Less emphasis was placed on gaudy annuals and more on lower maintenance perennials and wildflowers which created truly natural looking borders.

There was also the movement to preserve and develop natural areas, meadows and woodlands as seen in the work of Jens Jensen. He emphasized the natural lines of the prairie landscape through the use of stratified plant materials. He designed large estates with irregular borders of native trees and shrubs, along with meadows, pools, brooks and perennial flower borders. It was Jensen who designed the landscape of the Denkmann-Hauberg estate, located at 1300 24th Street. His plan, developed in 1910, made provision for over 40 kinds of trees—most native—along with wildflowers, walks, pools, terraces and flower beds of roses and tulips.

Wilhelm Miller, landscape extension agent for the University of Illinois, followed the lead of Jensen and others in espousing the "prairie style" of landscape

Even small lots could display the latest fashions. Here vines grace the porch, a hydrangea resides to the left of the walk, a castor bean to the right and cannas to the far right. (Source: Alfred Mueller Collection, Illinois Division of Historic Sites).

gardening. Miller, who wrote extensively during the years preceding World War I, emphasized the horizontal line as befitting Illinois prairie scenery. Native materials were championed while the increasingly despised "gardenesque" cannas, geraniums, begonias and coleus were banished to the back yard. Miller also recommended more plantings along the foundation, including trailing junipers under the windows. Because he wrote for the University of Illinois Division of Landscape Extension, he received widespread exposure in Illinois.

Low Maintenance and Suburban Uniformity

From 1900 to 1945 most of Rock Island's neighborhoods were characterized by lower maintenance and continued uniformity. While more straight lines moved in on small lots, the theories of Downing, Scott and their peers were still strongly evident. By World War I, the streets of Rock Island became uniform in width and surfacing (paving bricks replace dirt and gravel after 1900). Water and sewer lines were extended, electricity was generally adopted, and front fences were disappearing as foundation plantings became more pronounced.

Houses stood on taller foundations by the 1880s, thanks to the advent of central heating with furnaces in the basement. By 1900, landscapers were recommending more than an occasional shrub to tie them to the ground. Several shrubs with the tallest next to corners, were recommended. In Rock Island, three of the most common plants for this purpose became the spirea (Van Houtei), Japanese barberry, and hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata* var. grandiflora). Snowball, weigelia, deutzia, mock orange, lilac and rose were also commonly used.

Evergreens like the pfitzer juniper and Japanese yew became dominant after World War I and especially after World War II. Their use as foundation plantings had been popularized, in part, by plantings at the University of Illinois during the 1920s and 1930s.

While front fences were fast disappearing by World War I, most side fences—made of some type of wire or wood, often vine covered—remained. Hedges for property lines were recommended. Privies, stables and similar utilitarian spaces disappeared. Lawns—front, side and rear—became larger as ease of maintenance and motorized lawn mowers became prevalent. Street trees came increasingly under city control. The clutter of the earlier period was on the decline.

Landscape architects of the post Victorian period, heavily influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement in architecture which emphasized simple things of a more human scale, sought increasingly to link the house with the natural landscape. Patios, as we know them today, were becoming popular as families were freed from tight, enclosed spaces. As the 20th century progressed, the patio became more popular than the porch due to new architectural styles and social customs.

Pergolas became another way of extending the living space into the lawn. Many, in fact, were designed as architectural extensions of the house. The addition of vines completed the transition to the outdoors. Vines and trellises were viewed

THE GOULD

THERE'S so much to describe in this house that we cannot give more than a glance at the screened-in porch extending the full width of the house but must hurry into the living room. Then through colonnades into the cheerful dining room with its window seat beneath the three windows. A swinging door leads us into a kitchen which is all a housewife could ask for in the way of convenience.

The rest of the first floor comprises a bedroom with an unusually large closet, a bath, linen and broom closets, and, in the front of the house, a sun room.

Upstairs there are two large bedrooms and closets, a linen closet convenient to the hall, a sewing room in front, and a storage attic under the rear roof.

The Quad City Mueller Company featured the very latest design in the Fireside Homes catalog. This 1926 bungalow also shows the latest landscaping: circular bed of cannas (still popular), foundation plantings, with low growing shurbs under the windows, and pyramidal arbor vitae for accents.

as a necessity, as were those English perennial borders. Small rock gardens, pools, or other settings were often integrated with earlier landscaping, depending on the site and preference of the owner.

The older cast iron urns and lawn ornaments became less fashionable as newer technology created replacements of cement or terra cotta. Interestingly, the "rustic" look of Downing, which emphasized seats and summer houses of logs, branches and twigs, came back into vogue by the 1920s. Fences, when built after World War I, were more likely to be of woven wire or lattice work. Hedges—often of privet—were favored replacements for fences by the 1920s.

The early 20th century also saw a nationwide movement aimed at beautifying cities and streets. The effort came to the Quad Cities in 1913 when Davenport's Rotary Club inaugurated a "City Beautiful" contest. Cash prizes were given to those improving their grounds according to the principles of the day. The movement benefited Rock Island as well, and out of it came the Tri-City Garden Club, organized in 1919 by Elizabeth Putnam. They remain active to this day.

Local nurseries, while always ready to introduce something new, concentrated on improved varieties of old standards. Their offerings changed little between then and now—only the varieties and their color, texture and habit.

Planning Your Roots

Once you have some idea of how early landscape theory and practice evolved, you can begin researching your own site. Try to find out how it fits in. The three main places to look for historical information are:

Rock Island County Historical Society Library
822 11th Street
Moline, Illinois
Phone: (309)764-8590

Rock Island Public Library
401 19th Street
Rock Island, Illinois
Phone: (309)788-7627

Augustana College Library
3435 9 1/2 Avenue
Rock Island, Illinois
Phone: (309)793-7317

The Rock Island County Historical Library, Rock Island Public Library and Rock Island City Hall have a collection of twelve nursery catalogs and price lists. They are combined in a binder entitled: Collection of Illinois and Iowa Nursery Catalogs and Price Lists: 1857-1927.

Evaluating Your Site

Mapping

Before doing anything with your grounds, first locate everything you can on a sheet of graph paper. Do everything to scale while recording the following, preferably over the first year:

- ☐ Trees, shrubs, flowers
- ☐ House, garage, privy, well, garden
- ☐ Boundaries, fences, easements, water and sewer lines, phone and electric lines (both above and below ground)
- ☐ Soil conditions, drainage, slope

Historical Research

Your historical research will be ongoing. Here are some questions to ask:

- ☐ When was the house built? Altered?
- ☐ How large was the lot? Was it subdivided?
- ☐ Were there outbuildings?
- ☐ When were water and sewer extended?
- ☐ When was the street widened? Paved?
- ☐ What was the socio-economic status of the residents? Of the neighborhood?

Places to Look for Answers

Be sure to check out the Rock Island Preservation Commission's booklet "Roots of Your House." It lists in detail sources useful in documenting your house. Many of these may also provide valuable information on your grounds. Give particular attention to:

- ☐ **Pictorial Record**—Look for anything, including views of similar houses, lawns, neighborhoods. Check: old photographs, county histories and atlases, bird's eye views, Sanborn maps and old postcards.
- ☐ **Written Record**—This includes city directories, abstracts, assessments, probate records, building permits and newspapers.
- ☐ **Oral Record**—Try to find and talk to older residents and descendants—what do they remember about the house and owners, lot, lawn, street, plantings?

Develop Your Plan

Develop a philosophy. Ask yourself such questions as:

- ☐ What period is most appropriate—original construction or later remodeling?
- ☐ What is your goal? Restoration or only recapturing the character of the original landscape?
- ☐ What to do with subdivided lots, foundation plantings, mature trees, air conditioning units, and chain link fences?
- ☐ Maintenance—How much time do I have? (Keep it simple!)

Moving Ahead

By now you're ready to take the next step:

- ☐ Create that landscape plan—show everything.
- ☐ Prioritize work in stages—trees and shrubs this year, fence and gazebo next, flower beds after that.
- ☐ Develop list of plants that will serve your purpose—consider substitutes (you can't plant American elms any more).
- ☐ Consider costs and maintenance—wooden fences need paint every few years, carpet bedding can be lots of work.
- ☐ Be realistic, and patient!

Paying Attention to those Special Landscape Features

More than plants were a part of that period landscape. To really recreate that authentic period you must make note of other features:

☐ **Fences** were ubiquitous until 1890s, though increasingly less conspicuous as time goes by. Wooden were the most common—virtually every type and style was used in Rock Island (picket, vertical board, horizontal board, lattice). Wire (woven or iron rod) was common from the 1870s onward, with various styles evident. They were often seen along side yards as front fences disappeared. Wire fences were popular up to World War II. Cast iron fences were initially found on larger, wealthier lots, but as the turn-of-the century came, lighter and cheaper designs appeared in front of even modest homes.

☐ **Gazebos**, also called summer or garden houses, were the focal point of a flower garden or similar area. Sometimes they provided a view of a pleasant part of the

Picket fence typical of Rock Island homes, this one from the 1880s. (Source: Rock Island County Historical Society).

grounds. They were often vine-covered.

☐ **Benches, settees, urns, sundials, birdbaths, trellises, and arbors** were all used sparingly and were to have a purpose in mind. Mass produced units were available in Rock Island by the 1870s. Benches and settees were used in secluded areas, often to the side or rear of open areas; urns and sundials were along open areas or walks and on either side of porch steps; trellises were placed on porches or the sides of a house; and arbors were used between different spaces of the yard (separating orchard from flower garden, for example).

☐ **Walks**. Wooden walks were ubiquitous until cement sidewalks came in during the 1900-15 period. Brick was used with many early homes of more expense for the main walk or drive. Flagstone was often found as path to privy, garden or side entrance, while gravel was used in flower and formal garden areas.

PICKET FENCES.

made with a compass saw, or a foot-power scroll-saw. The top and bottom pieces between the pickets may be

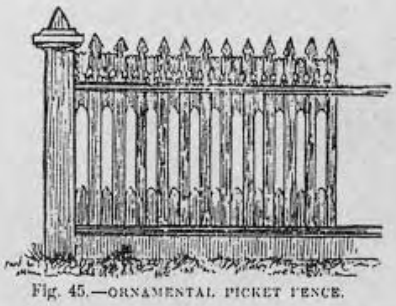


Fig. 45.—ORNAMENTAL PICKET FENCE.

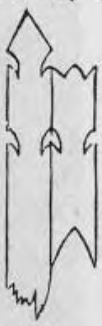


Fig. 46.

painted some other color than the fence, if so desired. Any carpenter should be able to construct it at a small advance over a fence made from plain pickets, making the pattern as in figure 46.

A plainer, but still very neat form of picket fence is

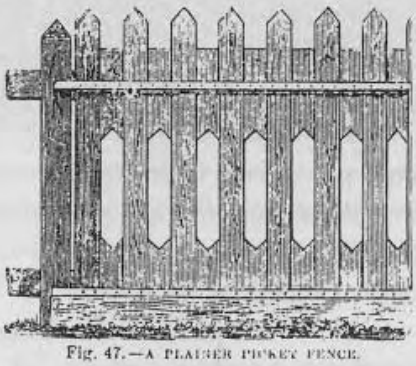
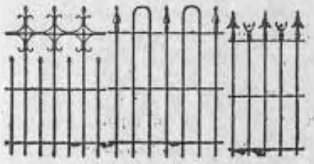


Fig. 47.—A PLAINER PICKET FENCE.

illustrated at figure 47. The intermediate pieces are notched at one end and square at the other.

Picket fences from an 1870s guidebook by George A. Martin, Fences, Gates, and Bridges.

ROCK ISLAND IRON WORKS,



Manufacturers of

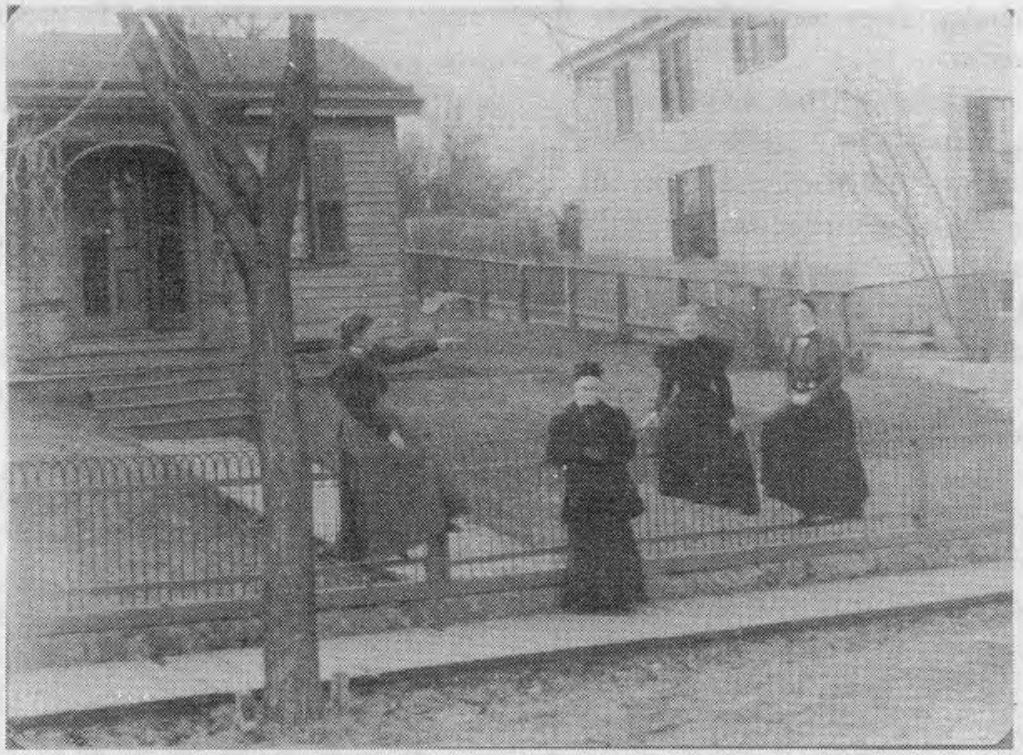
IRON FENCE AND ALL KINDS —OF— **CAST IRON WORK**

A Specialty of Furnishing all Kinds of Stoves with Castings at 8 Cents per Pound.

DOWNING BROTHERS, ROPRIETORS.

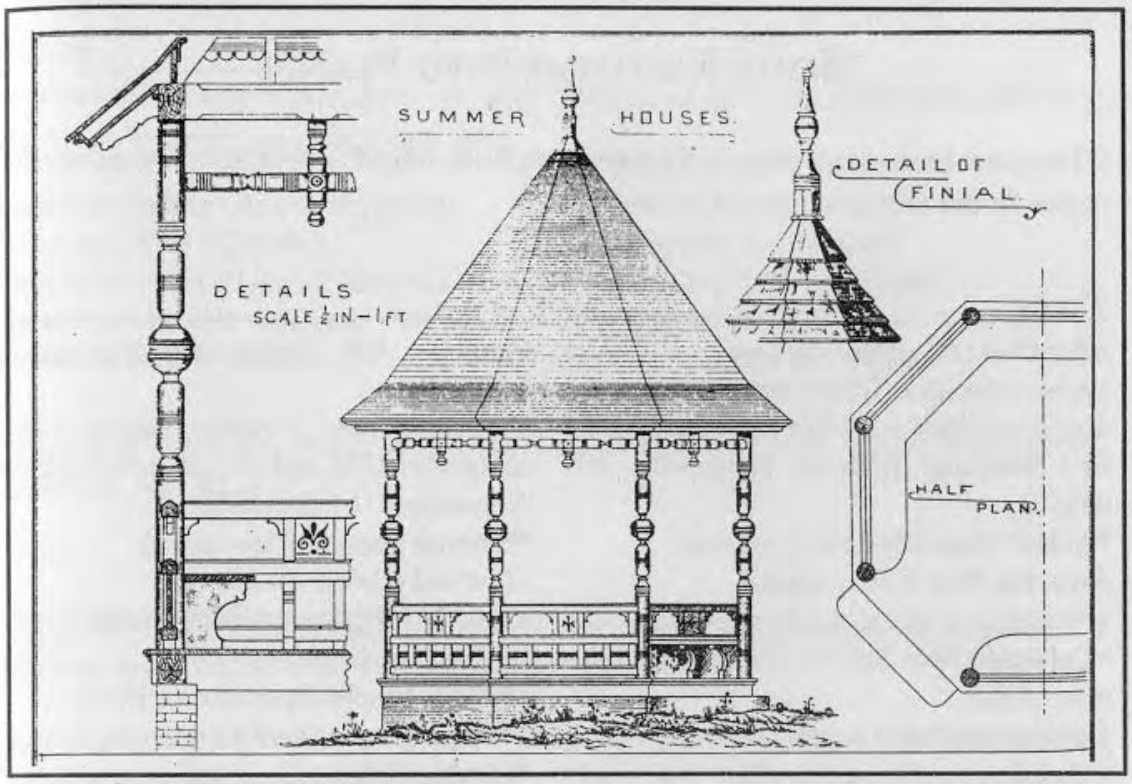
NINTH STREET AND SEVENTH AVENUE. ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS

Rock Island Iron Works supplied many of the iron fences ornamenting Rock Island homes. This ad appeared in the Second Annual Tri-City Trade Journal in 1893. (Source: Augustana College Library, Special Collections).

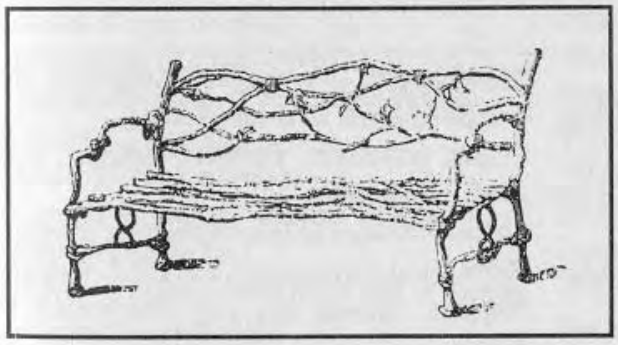


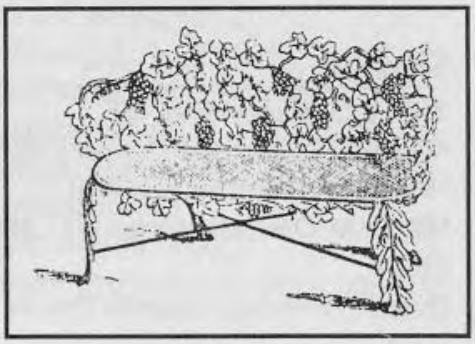
Family photo from Galena shows well three different styles of fences common to urban lots during the 1890s. The most open ornamental to the front, heavier and more functional fences to the side and rear of the lot. (Source: Alfred Mueller Collection, Illinois Division of Historic Sites).

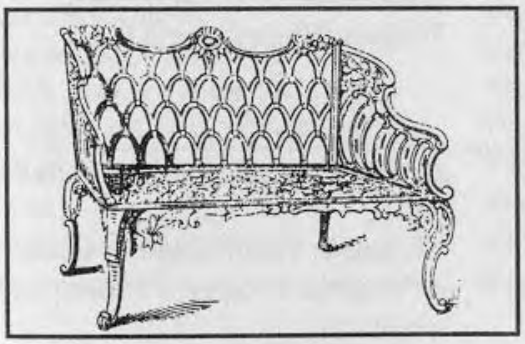
The Rock Island Sash and Door Works catalog for 1900 featured everything from hitching posts to lamp posts. (Source: Augustana College Library, Special Collections).



Recommended summer house for the 1880s as seen in a popular pattern book of the time (1881) by William T. Comstock.







Lawn furniture of the type recommended by Downing. These designs featured in an 1857 catalog were available from one of the largest suppliers of the period, Hutchinson & Wickersham of New York.

Some Recommended Plants

(*Denotes those plants especially popular in Rock Island; + denotes trees and shrubs native to the area).

Trees

Ailanthus (*Ailanthus altissima*)
+American Elm (*Ulmus americana*—only disease resistant ones, like those supplied by Elm Research Institute, Harrisville, NH 03450)
***Arbor Vitae** (*Thuja occidentalis*)
Austrian Pine (*Pinus nigra*)
+*Catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*—after 1880)
***Colorado Blue Spruce** (*Picea pungens*—after 1888)
Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*)
+Hawthorne (*Crataegus* sp.)
Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)
Larch (*Larix decidua*)
+Linden or Basswood (*Tilia americana*)
Mountain Ash (*Sorbus americana* and *S. aucuparia*)
***Norway Maple** (*Acer platanoides*—Especially after 1865 and the red-leaved variety "Schwedleri" by the 1880s)
***Norway Spruce** (*Picea abies*)
+Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)
+Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)
Scotch Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)
+*Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*)
+*Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)
Weeping Willow (*Salix babylonica*)
+White Ash (*Fraxinux americana*)
+*White Birch (*Betula papyrifera*)
+*White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)
White Spruce (*Picea glauca*)

Shrubs

Althea (*Hibiscus syriacus*)
***Barberry, Japanese** (*Berberis thunbergii*)
***Currant** (*Ribes sanguineum*)
***Deutzia** (*Deutzia scabra* and *D. gracilis* by 1900)
Dwarf Flowering Almond (*Prunus glandulosa*)
***Forsythia** (*Forsythia viridissima*)
***Honeysuckle** (*Lonicera tartarica*)
***Hydrangea** (*Hydrangea paniculata* var. grandiflora and *H. arborescans*)
***Lilac** (common, Persian—*Syringa vulagaris, S. persica*)
***Mock Orange** (*Philadelphus coronarius*)
Privet (*Ligustrum amurense* and *L. vulgare*)
***Spirea** (*Spirea* sp., esp. *Vanhouttei* by 1890s)
***Snowball** (*Viburnum opulus*)
Weigela (*Weigela florida*)

Vines

+Bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*)
***Chinese Wisteria** (*Wisteria sinensis*)
***Clematis** (*Clematis* sp., *jackmanii*)
Climbing Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*)
Grape (*Vitus* sp., esp the Concord and Isabella)
***Trumpet Vine** (*Campsis radicans*)
+*Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)

Roses

There were literally hundreds of varieties of roses, of all types, sold throughout this period. A few very popular ones were:

American Beauty (Hybrid Perpetual)
American Pillar (Climber)
Baronne Prevost (Hybrid Perpetual)
General Jacqueminot (Hybrid Perpetual)
Harison's Yellow (Shrub)
La France (Hybrid Tea)
Madame Hardy (Damask)
Queen of the Prairie (Climber)
Salet Perpetual (Moss)
York and Lancaster (Damask)

For more information, contact the American Rose Society, Box 30,000, Shreveport, Louisiana 71130.

Flowers and Bedding Plants

(Various kinds of the following):

Aster (*Aster* sp.)
Bachelor Button (*Centaurea cyanus*)
Balsams (*Impatiens balsamina*)
Begonia (*Begonia* sp.)
Caladium (*Caladium esculentum*)
Calendula or Pot Marigold (*Calendula officinalis*)
***Canna** (*Canna indica*)
Castor Bean (*Ricinus communis*)
***Chrysanthemum** (*Chrysanthemum* sp.)
***Coleus** (*Coleus* sp.)
Crocus (*Crocus vernus*)
Crown Imperial (*Fritillaria imperialis*)
***Dahlia** (*Dahlia* sp.)
***Daylily** (*Hemerocallis flava* and *H. flava*)
Fuchsias (*Fuchsia* sp.)
***Geranium** (*Pelargonium* sp.)
Gladiolus (*Gladiolus* sp.)
Grape Hyacinth (*Muscaria* sp.)
***Hollyhock** (*Althaea rosea* and others)
Hosta (Funkia or Daylily) (*Hosta* sp.)
Hyacinth (*Hyacinth* sp.)
Iris (*Iris* sp.)
Jonquil (*Narcissus jonquilla*)
Larkspur (*Delphinium* sp.)
***Lily** (*Lillium tigrinum* and others)
Lily-of-the-Valley (*Convallaria majalis*)
Marigold (*Tagetes* sp.)
Mignonette (*Reseda odorata*)
***Morning Glory** (*Ipomaea purpurea*)
***Narcissus** (*Narcissus odorus, N. pseudonarcissus* and others)
Pansy (*Viola* sp.)
***Peonies** (*Paeonia* sp.)
Petunia (*Petunia* sp.)
Phlox (*Phlox drummondii* and others)
***Pinks** (*Dianthus* sp.)
Salvia (*Salvia splendens*)
Snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus* and others)
Snow Drops (*Galanthus* sp.)
Sunflower (*Helianthus* sp.)
Sweet Pea (*Lathyrus odorata*)
Sweet William (*Dianthus barbatus*)
***Tulip** (*Tulipa* sp.)
***Verbena** (*Verbena* sp.)
Veronica (*Veronica* sp.)
Vinca (*Vinca minor*)
Violet (*Violet* sp.)
Zinnia (*Zinnia* sp.)

Sources:
Places to Find Period Plants

A majority of the plants found today in our lawns and gardens were also in use 100 years ago. Some of today's varieties, however, can be quite different from yesteryear's. It's best to first collect plant material from your own neighborhood—some of it persists if you look closely. But be careful since only the hardiest or weediest may have survived. You're still going to need some other good sources. For those who want to dig deep, check out Scott Kunst's "Source List for Historic Seeds and Plants" available at Rock Island's Public Library with the nursery catalog collection, or directly from Scott at Old House Gardens, 536 Third Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan,48103. Scott also handles many old bulb varieties. Local nurseries can supply you with many of the more common trees, shrubs and flowers.

For general gardening know-how, check out recent books by Reader's Digest, Burpee, Ortho and others. They're all good.

Sources:
Places to Find Garden Ornaments and Other Embellishments

Again, check out the neighborhood for fencing, benches, urns, or whatever, and don't forget those antique dealers! A good source for reproductions is:

Old House Journal Catalog
2 Main Street
Gloucester, Massachusetts 01930
(Cost is $19.95)

Good Luck!!

Selected Readings on Historic Landscapes

Carter, Tom, **The Victorian Garden**. Salem: Salem House, 1985

Coates, Alice M., **Garden Shrubs and Their Histories**. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1964.

A Collection of Illinois and Iowa Nursery Catalogs and Price Lists: 1857 - 1927. (Twelve catalogs photocopied and bound together; available at Rock Island Public Library, Rock Island County Historical Library and Rock Island City Hall in the Planning and Redevelopment Division).

Downing, Andrew Jackson, **A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening**. New York: C.M. Saxton and Co., 1856.

Downing, Andrew Jackson, **Victorian Cottage Residences**. New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1981.

Druitt, Liz and Shoup, Michael, **Landscaping With Antique Roses**. Newtown , CT: The Taunton Press, 1992.

Favretti, Rudy J. and Favretti, Joy P., **Landscapes and Gardens for Historic Buildings**. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1978.

Hedrick, Ulysses P., **A History of Horticulture in America to 1860**. New York: Oxford University Press, 1950.

Kline, Roger A., Robert F. Becker, and Lynn Belluscio, **The Heirloom Vegetable Garden**. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Cooperative Extension, 1984.

Kunst, Scott G., (Regular contributor to The Old House Journal) **"Carpet Bedding: Promiscuous Beds in the Victorian Landscape,"** The Old House Journal, Vol. XIII (April, 1985), pp. 60-67.

Kunst, Scott G., **"Turn of the Century Landscapes and Gardens,"** Vol. XIV (April, 1986), pp. 128-136.

Leighton, Ann, **American Gardens in the Nineteenth Century**. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987.

Rock Island Preservation Commission, **"Historic Landscaping for the Urban Lot,"** (workshop transcript of speakers Robert Harvey, Dean Sheaffer and Daryl Watson, with workshop charette critiques). Rock Island, Illinois, August 29, 1992.

Martin, Tovah, **Once Upon a Windowsill: A History of Indoor Plants**. Portland: Timber Press, 1988.

Scott, Frank J., **The Art of Beautifying Suburban Home Grounds of Small Extent**. New York: American Book Exchange, 1881 (recently reprinted).

Tice, Patricia M., **Gardening in America, 1830-1910**. Rochester: The Strong Museum, 1984.

Van Ravensway, Charles, **A Nineteenth Century Garden**. New York: Universe Books, 1977.

Watson, Daryl G., **"Dooryard Gardens in Early Illinois."** No.5 of Illinois Historic Preservation Series. Springfield: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 1984.

Be Sure To See These Other Rock Island Preservation Commission Publications:

Historic Landscaping

Workshop Transcripts: "Historic Landscaping for the Urban Lot." August 29, 1992.

History and Research

The Roots of Your House
Rock Island History: A Companion to the Architectural Walking Tours
Residential Design Guidelines for Rock Island Historic Districts and Landmarks

Walking Tours

Downtown Rock Island
A Walking Tour of Western Downtown
Chicago Addition Walking Tour
Spencer Place / 19th Street Walking Tour
20th Steet Walking Tour
22nd and 23rd Streets Walking Tour
Highland Park Historic District Walking Tour
A Walking Tour of 1918 Government Housing

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