



Figure 1: Ellen Peabody Eliot with Samuel Atkins Eliot in her lap and Charles Eliot at her side. This photograph may have been taken while the Eliot family was traveling in Europe. Courtesy of Alexander Y. Goriansky.

# MUSKAU AND AMERICA: PÜCKLER'S INFLUENCE ON CHARLES ELIOT AND REGIONAL LANDSCAPE PLANNING IN THE UNITED STATES

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Boston landscape architect Charles Eliot introduced America to the writings of Prince Ludwig Heinrich Hermann von Pückler and to his estate at Muskau in Germany as a model for the reform of landscape architecture in the United States.<sup>1</sup> For Eliot, Muskau was the ideal improved landscape, one that considered the environment of all members and elements of society, that assessed the inherent characteristics of the site and climate, and that relied primarily on indigenous plant material for its development. In his writings for the American profession and for the public, Eliot frequently referred to Pückler and to Muskau for the lessons they could teach. In his private estate and public park commissions, Eliot domesticated the Muskau formula, as he reinterpreted it for the needs of his contemporaries. This was not a subtle change of landscape attitudes but a significant redirecting of what landscape architects did and how they did it. His example in the United States was as powerful as had been that of Prince Pückler in Germany. In many ways, Eliot sought to follow Pückler's example, to the extent that different circumstances and times would allow.

Charles Eliot was naturally conditioned to make these connections.<sup>2</sup> The son of Charles W. Eliot and Ellen Peabody Eliot, the landscape architect was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1859 (Figure 1). His father was then a professor of chemistry at Harvard College; his mother was a descendant of prominent Boston families. After losing a promotion battle in 1863, Professor Eliot left Harvard and took his family to Europe for two years to observe laboratory practices in the sciences and to study the progressive educational environments of French and German secondary schools and universities.<sup>3</sup> Thus, his son early on became a product of a cosmopolitan intellectual culture. Unlike his father, however, young Charles was a diffident and introspective child, characteristics that became more pronounced when his mother died of tuberculosis and his father, surprisingly, ascended to the presidency of Harvard College, both in 1869.

Like Prince Pückler, a man fascinated by landscape gardening who spent much of his time between 1806 and 1810 traveling on the Continent

and between 1812 and 1815 in England, Charles Eliot was a landscape flâneur, a constant but attentive wanderer, and a connoisseur of landscape forms.<sup>4</sup> While still a teenager, Eliot began in 1875 to take a series of walking tours, often tied to the termini of public transportation routes, that allowed him to visit natural areas throughout the greater Boston basin.<sup>5</sup> In his diary of 1878, he provides a “Partial List of Saturday Walks before 1878.” Eliot would later recommend many of these sites as additions to the Metropolitan Park System.

Young Charles was naturally “fitted” for entrance to Harvard College, but he did not find the education or the environment to his liking. These were the years in which his father was attempting to reform the curriculum and structure of Harvard and, by extension, American higher education at large. President Eliot (Figure 2) integrated his study of French and German educational patterns with the existing American attitudes to formulate a new and challenging elective system for undergraduates and more rigorous programs for professional schools. Despite this revolution, young Charles found more rewarding his self-education during the summers that he spent camping on Mount Desert Island in Maine with the Champlain Society, a club of Harvard undergraduates that he founded to explore the natural history of the island.<sup>6</sup>

Following college, father and son discussed how the latter should train for the profession of landscape architecture since no academic programs existed in the United States. Young Charles first took science and agriculture courses at Harvard’s Bussey Institute and then accepted an unpaid internship in the Brookline offices of the dominant American landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted—indeed, Eliot was the first of an impressive series of interns who would emerge from Fairsted, the name of the Olmsted home and studio.<sup>7</sup> While working for Olmsted, Eliot helped to prepare the plans for the nearby Arnold Arboretum, developed under its first director, Charles Sprague Sargent, as well as for the continued development of the Boston Municipal Park System.

After two productive years with Olmsted, Eliot decided that he needed to continue his education as a landscape architect through a period of travel, first in the United States and then for a year in Europe.<sup>8</sup> While traveling, Eliot wrote frequently to Olmsted about the sites he visited and the people he met. Olmsted responded:

I have seen no such justly critical notes as yours on landscape architecture matters from any traveler for a generation past. You ought to make it a part of your scheme to write for the public, a little at a time if you please, but methodically, systemically. It is part of your professional duty to do so.<sup>9</sup>



Figure 2: President Charles W. Eliot, 1875. Harvard University Archives.

In following this advice, Eliot began to turn to Pückler as his alternative to Olmsted as a role model in the field of landscape architecture.

After a five-month excursion to American sites, Eliot was in Europe from November 1885 through October 1886, spending the largest percentage of his time in England but traveling widely in Britain and on the Continent, as far east as Russia and as far south as Italy. Before embarking on his personal Grand Tour, Eliot spent the dreary winter months reading voraciously at the British Museum. He consumed the literature of landscape design and theory from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries in English, French, and German.

On January 10, 1886, Eliot recorded the following observations from Prince Pückler's *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei* (1834):

In the park, I make it a point to use only native or thoroughly acclimated trees and shrubs, and avoid entirely all foreign decorative plants. For nature beautified must still preserve the character of the country and climate in which the park is situated; so that its beauty may seem to have grown spontaneously, and without betraying the pains which have been spent on it.<sup>10</sup>

January 19, Eliot devoted to "Skell and Furst Muskau, the great Germans after Hirschfeld. Their books not very valuable and very tough reading." By the 22nd, however, he had finished several books by or about Prince Pückler, deciding to "consider his book one of the best after all."<sup>11</sup>

In addition to his time at the British Museum, Eliot used his months in England to learn about the emerging efforts in landscape preservation. Through his father, he was introduced to James Bryce, British historian, politician, conservationist, Secretary of the Commons Preservation Society, and author of the Scottish Mountains bill.<sup>12</sup> Bryce recommended Eliot attend speeches given by fellow conservationists and provided further introductions (Figure 3). During his tour of England, Eliot met with Canon Rawnsley, vicar of Crossthwaite, Keswick, and secretary of the Lakeland Defense Association, then fighting the intrusion of railroads and reservoirs into sites like Thirlmere in the Lake District.<sup>13</sup>

Eliot proceeded methodically with his extensive European tour, planning the visit to Muskau as one of the final stops of this educational hegira. Eliot arrived in Muskau on September 21, 1886, and reported in a letter to his family:

The village is surrounded by a park, the Schloss standing close beside the village, near the river Neisse. My walk was long and most interesting. This is landscape gardening on a grand scale, and the resulting scenery is extremely lovely. Altogether it is the most remarkable and lovable park I have seen on the Continent.

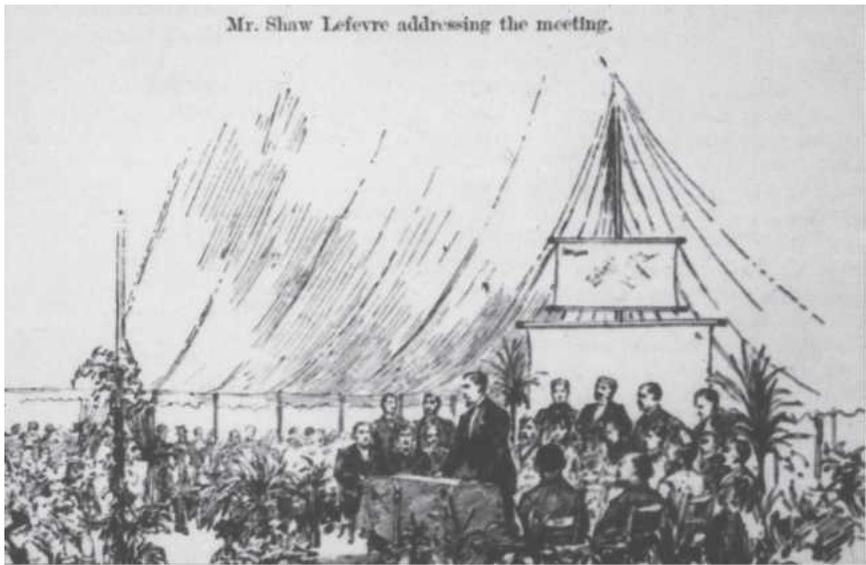


Figure 3: Mr. Shaw Lefevre addressing a meeting concerning the preservation of the Hampsted Heath, London, 1885. Courtesy of the Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

There are no ledges; but steep irregular slopes of river bluffs, and hills beyond. The woods have an almost American variety of species, and many American plants are very common,—such as wild Cherry, Acacia and Cornel . . . This work by Furst Puckler is of a sort to make me very proud of my profession! For here in a land of dull, almost stupid scenery, Nature has been induced to make a region of great beauty, great variety, and wonderful charm.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps Eliot had realized in advance that he had saved the finest example of landscape architecture for the climax of his tour.

In one of the last letters he wrote before returning from Europe in October 1886, Eliot reported to his mentor Olmsted: “My travels are over: for I cannot imitate Count Pückler—who journeyed through Europe for five years or more.” He continued:

I spent two whole days there [at Muskau], in the park all the time. In London last winter I had read his little book, and the descriptions written by his foreman after his death and something about the count’s life . . . His park is probably the finest work of real landscape gardening on a large scale that this century has seen

carried out in Europe. It is a work that has made one proud of the profession—for here was a river valley in great part very barren, fringed by monstrous woods of p. sylvestric and in no way remarkable for beauty—but now one of the loveliest vales on earth—full to the brim, so to speak, of variety or pleasant change, of quieting and often touching beauty.<sup>15</sup>

The example of Muskau and the model of the prince would continue to haunt Eliot throughout his life.

After his return to America, Eliot continued to ponder and apply the lessons of Muskau. Declining an invitation from Olmsted to become a member of his firm, Eliot established an independent practice in landscape architecture in Boston in December 1886. As Olmsted had advised, Eliot soon began to write on a range of topics in landscape architecture, often citing Muskau as a cure for American ills. On April 4, 1888, Eliot published an article in *Garden and Forest* entitled “Anglomania in Park Making” in which he argued against the American habit of using English models of landscape design as the constant formula. Instead, Eliot wanted his colleagues to study the quality of the site and region, “using no planting of incongruous specimens and no out-of-place flower-bedding.” He continued:

The park of Muskau teaches the same lesson, and under conditions closely resembling those of the Middle States. Indeed, American trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants are very numerous in this noble park . . . It is next to impossible to find an American park in which these things have been planted as freely.<sup>16</sup>

For another issue of the journal later that month, Eliot also submitted “A list of books on landscape gardening” that was culled from his readings at the British Museum. Beginning in 1625 with Francis Bacon, the bibliography ends in 1834 with Fürst Hermann Ludwig von Pückler-Muskau’s *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*.<sup>17</sup>

On January 28, 1891, Eliot published a lengthy review essay on Muskau, illustrated by a map that he had been given by a friend, Dr. Carl Bolle in Berlin, before his visit to the estate (Figure 4). After a brief biography of the prince and a recounting of his travels in the early nineteenth century, Eliot praised Pückler for “his intense interest in both natural and humanized scenery.” Eliot continued:

[W]e find Pückler . . . intent upon including in one great landscape scheme his Schloss, his village, his alum works, and all the slopes and levels that enclose them—intent upon evolving from out of the confused natural situation a composition in which all that was fundamentally characteristic of the scenery, the history,



and the industry of his estate should be harmoniously and beautifully united.<sup>18</sup>

Eliot admitted that Pückler had been fortunate to have a contained valley with an ample river for his composition. "To restore the unity of the river-level just mentioned, he had to buy and remove a whole street of village houses which extended from the town square to the mill."<sup>19</sup> He had to purchase 2,000 morgen of land in all. "In the upland regions the original tangle of knolls, dells and glades was to be made still more pleasantly intricate by opening the wood here and closing it there, and by breaking and fringing the original Pine forest with a great variety of appropriate trees and shrubs." "It would be difficult to make choices between the view from the low-lying Schloss over the quiet meadows to the semicircle of hills beyond the river, and the reverse view from these hills looking across the stream and the intervale to where turrets of the Schloss and the long row of village roofs lie close together under the edge of the dark woods which crown the western range of heights."<sup>20</sup>

Eliot concluded:

The significance for us Americans of this work at Muskau is very obvious . . . half of our continent presents verdurous scenery of many different types, from the rocky Pine woods of Quebec to the Palmetto thickets of Florida. Throughout this varied region there is a woeful tendency to reduce to one conventional form all such too meager portions of the original landscape as are preserved in private country-seats and public parks . . . When shall a rich man or a club of citizens, an enlightened town or a pleasure resort do for some quiet lakeshore of New England, some long valley in the Alleghenies, some forest-bordered prairie of Louisiana, what Puckler did for his valley of the Neisse? He preserved everything that was distinctive. He destroyed neither his farm nor his mill, nor yet his alum works; for he understood that these industries, together with all the human history of the valley, contributed to the general effect a characteristic element only second in importance to the quality of the natural scenery itself.<sup>21</sup>

The comprehensive and integrated treatment of the prince's landholdings would remain the dominant lesson from Muskau for Eliot.

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From his earliest commissions, Eliot was mindful of the example of Muskau for a range of American landscape types, from which I will choose four initial examples. One of his earliest public park designs was

for the modestly scaled White Park in Concord, New Hampshire. In his first report to the park commissioners on May 10, 1888, Eliot wrote:

Every city of the new West may have its carpet-bed 'park' if it so wishes, but Concord proposes to seize her opportunity to provide for her citizens and their posterity something very much more valuable. She will set aside and preserve, for the enjoyment of all orderly townspeople, a typical, strikingly beautiful, and very easily accessible bit of New England landscape. Would that every American city and town might thus save for its citizens some characteristic portion of its neighboring country! We should then possess public places which would exhibit something more refreshing than the monotony of clipped lawns and scattered flower beds.

The plan adopted by the Commission provides for the enhancement of the natural beauty of the park by spreading water in the lowland where nature made a marsh, by making grassy glades in two or three hollow parts where nature grew Alders and Birches, by planting a thicket of Mountain Laurel here and opening a vista to the Merrimac there; and then the plan leads paths in such directions and by such routes as will best display the beauty of the place while injuring it least.

Landscape art does not consist in arranging trees, shrubs, borders, lawns, ponds, bridges, fountains, paths or any other things "so as to produce a picturesque effect." It is rather the fitting of landscape to human use and enjoyment in such manner as may be most appropriate and most beautiful in any given space. When this is generally understood by the public and practiced by the profession, parks and country-seats will be so designed as to be not only well arranged and beautiful, but beautiful in some distinctive and characteristic way, as is the White Park at Concord.<sup>22</sup>

For Eliot, the driving purpose in the creation of the White Park was the preservation of a typical element of New England scenery. While the state capital, Concord was also a mill town, and Eliot sought to provide a bit of regional landscape for all levels of society. He wanted to insure that it contained no artificial elements of park-making, such as carpet bedding, but relied upon an analysis of the site, the area, and its history for the creation of this public park.

Other early commissions allowed Eliot to apply the lessons of Muskau in a range of circumstances. For the textile-mill-owning Hazard family in Peacedale, Rhode Island, he laid out their private estates. He also developed "the Waterway," an entrance drive along the mill race as

a green corridor for all to use and laid out the grounds of the adjacent public library and memorial hall built by the Hazards across from the mill complex and company store. Just as Pückler had incorporated his alum factory as well as his Schloss, for the Hazards Eliot strove to create a comprehensive and inclusive landscape that stretched from the mill square to the owners' estates. As Eliot wrote to Mrs. Rowland Hazard on August 27, 1888: "When you come to start upon your delightful scheme of a village park in connection with the Memorial building, you will be sure to feel the need of a plan of the neighborhood. A plan would also help to solve many problems on your several adjacent estates."<sup>23</sup> In November 1888, he wrote again: "You will see I have imagined that all the land between the new Hall and the old house will become part of Peace Park, and that the pond-shore, up at least as far as the brook which enters the cove, will be included."<sup>24</sup> Eliot's landscape development at Peacedale reinforced the efforts of Roland Hazard II as both mill owner and as the amateur architect for many of the buildings and bridges in the village (Figure 5).<sup>25</sup>

The park commissioners of Youngstown, Ohio, led by a young lawyer named Volney Rogers, invited Eliot in 1891 to develop the river valley of Mill Creek as a comprehensive park corridor for the industrial city. While the valley of Mill Creek does not represent as broad and generous a corridor as Pückler's Neisse River, Eliot could not have avoided seeing the relationship in this commission. As Eliot described the environment in a letter to his wife:

This beautiful park is a winding gorge with bluffs on each side which vary from sixty to more than a hundred feet in height. A rapid stream flows through it; and within the park area several tributaries enter this stream through deep wooded ravines. . . . In the valley are two small lakes,—ponds they would be called in New England,—one having a water surface of about forty-three acres, the other of about twenty-six. It is desirable to have a drive on each side of the gorge its full length.<sup>26</sup>

Eliot provided walks, bridle paths, and carriage drives to allow residents of Youngstown total access to the natural landscape, an amphitheater, and a pavilion for resting. The circuit of these lakes, the creek, and the ravine were landscape preservation and development problems not unlike the ones that Pückler confronted at Muskau.

One last example is the Pitcairn family commissions and the properties for the cathedral and academy of the New Jerusalem in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. John Pitcairn, a Scot by birth who prospered in Pittsburgh and became the president of Pittsburgh Plate Glass, provided the funds to establish a village for members of the Church of the New Jerusalem, a sect

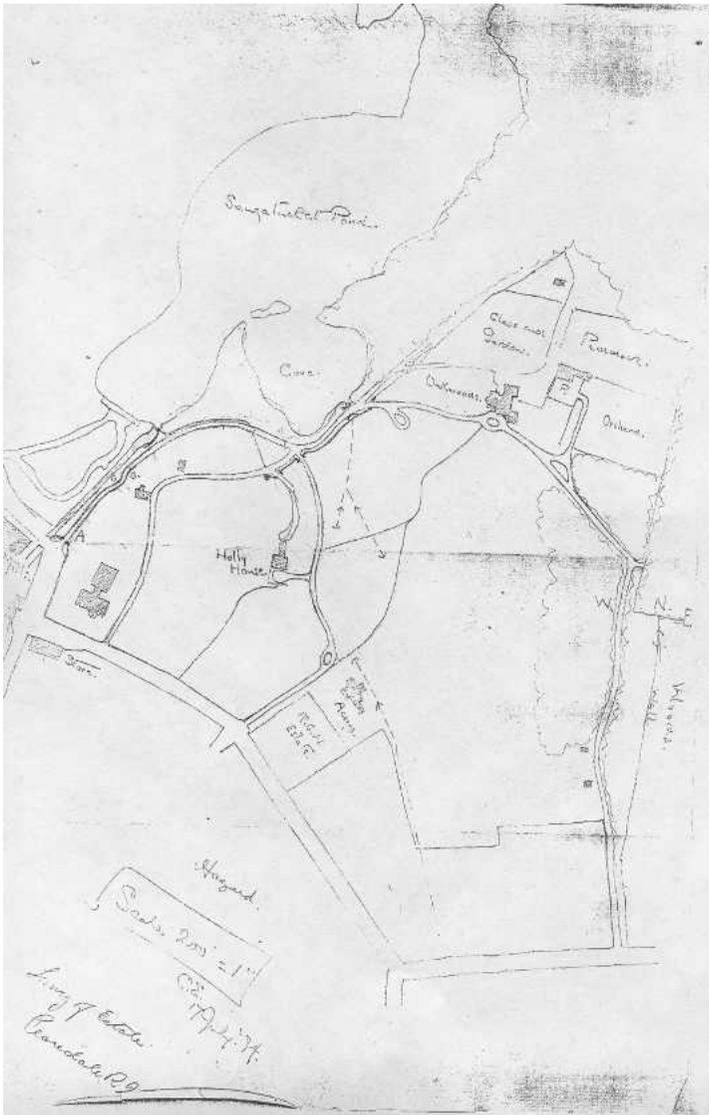


Figure 5: Plan of the Hazard family property, Peacedale, Rhode Island, drawn by Charles Eliot, July 9, 1894. Note Oakwoods and Holly House, two estates for members of the Hazard family at right and center; Saugetucket Pond at the top and the mill race paralleled by the Waterway entrance drive at its bottom; at the left center are the mills and the company store opposite an H-shaped building which was the memorial hall and library built by the Hazard family. Courtesy of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, National Park Service, Brookline, Massachusetts.

of Swedenborgianism.<sup>27</sup> Charles Eliot began to plan for the development of the Academy of the New Jerusalem in 1891, for which Carrère and Hastings designed the early buildings. He continued to work for the Pitcairns over the remainder of his life.

Eliot's earliest letter to John Pitcairn about the possible sites of the Academy stated the following:

The land should possess, if possible, some unity of topographic character. It should not be a jumble of unrelated slopes and shapes. It should possess some pleasing central feature such as a sheet of water, a stream, or a valley, so that its effect of composition may be attainable. No boundaries should be scientific—that is they should conform to the topography in such a way as will tend to enhance the effect of unity. If woods or fine trees assist in framing and adorning the central scene so much the better.<sup>28</sup>

Eliot also laid out the grounds of Cairnwood, the first of the Pitcairn family houses, and the lane of more modest dwellings that Pitcairn gradually sold to New Church members and staff. Boston architect Ralph Adams Cram later designed the Cathedral of the New Jerusalem, begun in 1916 after the deaths of both John Pitcairn and Charles Eliot.

Eliot's largest application of the Muskau model is in the development of landscape conservation strategies for metropolitan Boston and for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In February 1890, Eliot submitted an article to *Garden and Forest* entitled "The Waverley Oaks: A Plan for Their Preservation for the People" in which he urged the acquisition of a stand of "aboriginal" trees of great beauty on the border between Belmont and Waltham, Massachusetts, "just as the Public Library holds books and the Art Museum pictures."<sup>29</sup> He put this idea into practice by directing the formation of the Trustees of Public Reservations, a private, statewide land conservation organization authorized by the Massachusetts legislature in 1891. He modeled this society on the early landscape conservation efforts he had observed in England, but its comprehensive attitude towards landscapes worthy of preservation was derived as much from Muskau.

Eliot quickly learned that a private organization could not move as rapidly or as expansively as he felt necessary and developed plans for a regional, public authority to acquire and preserve distinctive and unique landscapes in the metropolitan region of Boston. Lest I build a hagiography for Eliot as a unique visionary, I must admit that others who saw the need and the means joined him in this enterprise. Eliot was not the only one to look to German models for regional planning. For example, the Malden, Massachusetts, journalist Sylvester Baxter was already praising the examples of German forest management and regional planning as a

course Americans should follow.<sup>30</sup> Baxter had been schooled by Elizur Wright, whose farm crossed the boundary between two suburban towns and who fought for the development of the surrounding forest district, the Middlesex Fells, as a public landscape. In 1892, as a result of lobbying efforts led by Charles Eliot, a temporary Metropolitan Park Commission was established for Boston and the surrounding communities of the Boston basin. The permanent legislation was adopted the following year, and Eliot was named as the landscape architect to the commission, while Sylvester Baxter served as the secretary. Appropriately, the Beaver Brook Reservation, which incorporated the Waverley Oaks, was the first acquired by the new authority.

In his first letter to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., chairman of the temporary commission, Eliot outlined the landscape types he wished to incorporate into the system that would serve the entire Boston region:

As I conceive it, the scientific 'park system' for a district such as ours should include

1<sup>st</sup> Space upon the Ocean front.

2<sup>nd</sup> As much as possible of the shores and islands of the Bay.

3<sup>rd</sup> The courses of the larger tidal estuaries (above their commercial usefulness) because of the value these courses as pleasant routes to the heart of the City and the Sea.

4<sup>th</sup> Two or three large areas of wild forest on the outer rim of the inhabited area.

5<sup>th</sup> Numerous small squares in the midst of dense populations.<sup>31</sup>

This broad scheme presented a larger landscape analysis than had ever been attempted in America.

To explain these concepts and others, Eliot invoked a landscape language that had not previously been employed. His arena, he felt, was the physical world at large. In a lecture to a farmers' association in New York State, he explained that he meant "by the term 'landscape' the visible surroundings of men's lives on the surface of the earth." Eliot considered himself an architect and referred repeatedly to the definition of architecture borrowed from the English socialist and preservationist William Morris: "Architecture, a great subject truly, for it means the molding and the altering to human needs of the very face of the earth."<sup>32</sup> This broad environmental consciousness is rooted surely in the lessons Eliot drew from Prince Pückler.

To achieve his broad aims for landscape preservation, Eliot lobbied ceaselessly through prolific letter writing, frequent public speaking, appearances before legislative committees, and regular contributions to popular magazines and professional journals. His major written contribution to a philosophy of scenery management and enhancement was his



Figure 6: Arthur A. Shurcliff, *Tree-clogged Notch in the Middlesex Fells Reservation*, published in Charles Eliot, *Vegetation and Scenery in the Metropolitan Reservations of Boston* (1898).

report published in 1898, *Vegetation and Scenery in the Metropolitan Reservations of Boston*.<sup>33</sup> Although specific in its definition of the basic landscapes found in the Boston metropolitan reservations and the appropriate methods for their management and development, Eliot's report had generic implications as well for the emerging field of regional landscape planning in the United States. The study followed from years of analysis of the geology, topography, horticulture, and human use of the acquired landscapes. He stressed that all of these sites were "artificial," countering the popular assumption that these reservations were "wild" and should not be changed in any way (Figures 6 and 7). Instead, he established rational principles for the management of these places for the people.

The first four of Eliot's landscape types illustrate the way that he developed the Metropolitan Park program. First on his list of landscape forms that should be controlled by a public authority was "Space upon the Ocean front." As a member of the Brahmin elite who could escape the summer heat of Boston on the family yacht or at their house on Mount Desert Island, Maine, Eliot was sensitive to the need for public access to the ocean. He urged the Metropolitan Park Commission to acquire the long crescent beach at Revere north of Boston as an easily accessible site for summer bathing. He quickly seized by eminent domain the railroad along the crest of the beach and the private bathhouses, bars, and dance-halls that prevented free public access. He moved the railway line away



Figure 7: Arthur A. Shurcliff, *Cleared Notch in the Middlesex Fells Reservation*, published in Charles Eliot, *Vegetation and Scenery in the Metropolitan Reservations of Boston* (1898).

from the beach, tore down the shanty developments, and constructed public bathhouses, pavilions, and a police station to regulate and perfect a day at the shore. One must admit that this is an upper-class assumption of what the experience of ocean bathing should be for the working class. Nevertheless, the public arrived by the tens of thousands to enjoy what is America's earliest public ocean beach (Figure 8).<sup>34</sup>

A second broad landscape type for Eliot was the tidal estuaries that fed into Boston Harbor—the Mystic, Charles, and Neponset Rivers. The Charles was the central, largest, and most important of the three and the one that eluded Eliot's efforts during his lifetime (Figure 9). As early as midcentury, the tidal estuary of the Charles was the focus of proposals for its redevelopment.<sup>35</sup> Eliot began to work at this problem in the early 1890s in projects for the Cambridge Park Commission that included the reclamation from industrial uses of the Cambridge shore of the Charles River. He joined a legislative commission to study the possibility of damming the Charles River near its junction with Boston Harbor to allow its development as a freshwater park. The wealthy property owners along Beacon Street, whose houses enjoyed a view over the smelly expanse of the Charles estuary, feared that a freshwater river would encourage park development behind their residences, allowing public access to their prized vista. Among the sources to which Eliot turned for inspiration was the Alster Basin in Hamburg, which he had visited and photographed on



Figure 8: Revere Beach Reservation, Revere, Massachusetts, 1896. From *Charles Eliot, Landscape Architect* (1902), following page 676.



Figure 9: Charles River Basin from the air, ca. 1980 (courtesy of Alex S. MacLean/Landslides).



Figure 10: One of the Alster Basins at Hamburg, published by Charles Eliot in his report on the Muddy River and the Charles River, 1896.

his 1886 tour (Figure 10).<sup>36</sup> His proposals were not endorsed by the legislature, and it was not until 1910, more than a decade after Eliot's death, that the damming of the Charles was completed and the river reservation he had envisioned and fought for was initially developed. Eliot died rapidly from spinal meningitis in the spring of 1897, after only one decade of professional practice. Although he initially was determined to have his own office, he eventually agreed to form a partnership—Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot—in 1893. From that base, he pursued his massive scheme for the preservation and development of the landscape of Greater Boston and an exhausting list of projects throughout the country.

In these impressive efforts, Eliot's debt to Prince Pückler remained consistent and obvious. He had learned his profession, in part, as a wanderer, following the example if not the itinerary of Prince Pückler. He had written about his travels and observations, interpreting ideals observed in different circumstances and the lessons they could teach, as had the prince. He believed, like Pückler, that both natural and human landscapes merited preservation and development. He sought to find the inherent quality or character in any landscape and improve it, primarily through the use of native plant material. Eliot believed in the broad treatment of all forms of landscape, as he had observed in Muskau, and in improving the intimate interaction of man with his environment (Figure 11). He fought for the creation of public landscape forms for all levels of society.



Figure 11: Charles Eliot, spring 1897. Courtesy of Alexander Y. Goriansky.

Even Eliot's earlier mentor, Frederick Law Olmsted, ultimately understood how novel and important the larger vision of landscape preservation and development derived from Pückler and Muskau was for the history of landscape architecture in the United States. Writing to his

partners John Charles Olmsted and Charles Eliot in 1893, Olmsted summarized his feelings about the significance of their current projects:

Nothing else compares in importance to us with the Boston work, meaning the Metropolitan quite equally with the city work. The two together will be the most important work in our profession now in hand anywhere in the world . . . In our probable life-time, Muddy River, Blue Hills, the Fells, Waverly Oaks, Charles River, and the Beaches will be points to date from in the history of American Landscape Architecture, as much as Central Park. They will be the opening of new chapters in the art.<sup>37</sup>

From Olmsted's list, only the Muddy River development of the Boston Municipal Park System was a project inaugurated before Eliot joined the partnership—all of the others were ones he brought to the firm. The Blue Hills and the Middlesex Fells were substantial forest reservations at the edges of the Boston Basin. The Waverley Oaks were the initial inspiration for the Trustees of Public Reservations and the first acquisition of the Boston Metropolitan Park System. By "the Beaches," Olmsted was primarily referring to Revere Beach on the Atlantic Ocean. The Charles River was the central of the three tidal estuaries that flow into Boston Harbor and the spine for the metropolitan landscape plan. As key elements of the comprehensive regional landscape vision that Eliot conceived, they are ultimately heirs in great measure to the ideals of Prince Pückler at Muskau.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Gert Groening discusses the interest of both Charles Eliot and his father, Charles W. Eliot, in German landscape literature and Pückler's work at Muskau in his essay "Über einige Aspekte der Arbeit deutsch-amerikanischer Gartenarchitekten in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Die Gartenkunst* 18, no. 1(2006): 33.

<sup>2</sup> The standard source for information on Charles Eliot is the biography/anthology published anonymously by his father: [Charles W. Eliot], *Charles Eliot. Landscape Architect* (Boston, 1902):hereafter CELA. In 1999, the University of Massachusetts Press republished the volume with a new introduction by Keith N. Morgan for the Library of American Landscape History's series celebrating the centennial of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

<sup>3</sup> For further information on President Eliot, consult: Henry James, *Charles W. Eliot. President of Harvard University, 1869–1909* (Boston, 1930) and Hugh Hawkins, *Between Harvard and America: The Educational Leadership of Charles W. Eliot* (New York, 1972).

<sup>4</sup> Charles Eliot discussed the landscape travels of Prince Pückler in his essay "Muskau—A German Country Park," *Garden and Forest* (January 18, 1891): "He saw Vienna, Munich, Switzerland, Venice, Rome, Naples, southern France, Paris and the lands between, for all his journeying was done wither on foot or on horseback . . . [In 1812] he made his first visit to England, where he saw the landscape work of Brown and Repton . . ." CELA, 359.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Eliot, diary for 1875, Charles Eliot Collection held by Alexander Goriansky.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the Eliots' (father and son) activities at Mount Desert, Maine, and the eventual effort to secure a landscape reservation on that island, see David Haney, "Scenic Illusions: The Nature Pursuit at Mount Desert Island" (MA thesis, Yale University, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Municipal Park System* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), discusses Eliot and Henry Sargent Codman, the first two interns in the Fairsted office who later became members of the firm: see 131–35.

<sup>8</sup> For his father's discussion of Eliot's work in the Olmsted office, see CELA, 34–45. From June through October 1885, Eliot visited urban parks, arboreta, country estates and natural areas from New England down the Atlantic seaboard to the Appalachian and Great Smokey mountains of Virginia and North Carolina. This domestic "grand tour" was a dress rehearsal for his longer and more influential study tour through England and Europe.

<sup>9</sup> CELA, 207.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Eliot, 1886 diary, January 10, 1886, Charles Eliot Collection held by Alexander Goriansky.

<sup>11</sup> The call cards that Eliot presented at the British Museum Library have been preserved in the Charles Eliot Papers, Special Collections, Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University. On October 11, 1885, he inspected for the first time Pückler's *Andeutungen* (1834) and *Aus dem Nachlass des Fürsten von Pückler-Muskau* (Leipzig, 1873–74).

<sup>12</sup> James Bryce was both a professor of law and member of Parliament. He had first met President Eliot and his son in 1879 when he stayed at the Eliot house in Cambridge during a tour of the United States. He later became the most respected observer of the American political system: his book *The American Commonwealth* was published in 1888.

<sup>13</sup> Rawnsley was keenly interested in what Eliot could tell him of conservation efforts in the United States and became ultimately one of the founders of the National Trust for Places of Scenic and Natural Beauty in England. Charles Eliot Norton, his father's cousin and his former professor of art history at Harvard, may have introduced Eliot to Rawnsley. Norton was an early member of the Lakeland Defense Society and a close friend of another influential Lake District resident, John Ruskin.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Eliot to his family, September 21, 1886, Charles Eliot correspondence for 1886 held by Alexander Y. Goriansky; CELA, 190–191.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Eliot to Frederick Law Olmsted, October 10, 1887, Eliot correspondence for 1887, held by Alexander Goriansky. Eliot also mentions here discussing Muskau with fellow Olmsted office member Henry Sargent Codman in an earlier letter.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Eliot, "Anglomania in Park Making," *Garden and Forest* (April 4, 1888): 64; CELA, 217–18. It was not that Eliot wanted to substitute Muskau for England but rather that the choice of plant material of indigenous quality was as evident at Muskau as in any American park. The plant material at Muskau was often quite similar to American conditions.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Eliot, "A List of Books on Landscape Gardening," *Garden and Forest* (April 18, 1888) 94–95; CELA, 221–23.

<sup>18</sup> "Muskau—A German Country Park," *Garden and Forest* (January 28, 1891): 38–41; reprinted in CELA, 358–63. This citation can be found on page 360.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> CELA, 361.

<sup>21</sup> CELA, 362–63.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Eliot, "The White Park," *Garden and Forest* (August 13, 1890): 390–91.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Eliot to Mrs. Rowland Hazard, August 27, 1888, Charles Eliot Collection, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University; CELA, 237.

<sup>24</sup> Charles Eliot to Mrs. Rowland Hazard, November, 1888. CELA, 236.

- <sup>25</sup> William H. Jordy et al., *Buildings of Rhode Island* (New York, 2004), 383–85, provides a comprehensive discussion of the development of the Peacedale mill village and estate complex.
- <sup>26</sup> Charles Eliot to Mary Yale Eliot, May 11, 1891, Charles Eliot collection held by Alexander Goriansky; CELA, 299–300.
- <sup>27</sup> Mary Ann Meyers, *A New World Jerusalem: The Swedenborgian Experience in Community Construction*, Contributions in American Studies, 65 (Westport, 1983), especially chapter 4, “The Physical and Social Structure: Establishment of a Community,” 52–60, provides basic information on the creation of the Academy, the Pitcairn family estates, the Cathedral, and a development of houses for staff of the school and church.
- <sup>28</sup> Charles Eliot to Jonathan Pitcairn, October 17, 1891, Charles Eliot Collection, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.
- <sup>29</sup> Charles Eliot, “The Waverley Oaks: A Plan for Their Preservation for the People,” *Garden and Forest* (February 19, 1890): 85–86; CELA, 318 (article 317–19). For a further discussion of Waverly Oaks, see Eleanor McPeck, Keith Morgan, and Cynthia Zaitzevsky, eds., *Olmsted in Massachusetts: The Public Legacy. Report of the Inventory Committee of the Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks* (Brookline, 1983), 1–7.
- <sup>30</sup> Sylvester Baxter, “Greater Boston’s Metropolitan Park System,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, September 29, 1893. Baxter explained the chronology of the development of the metropolitan ideal for Boston: In 1891, a brochure called ‘Greater Boston,’ by the present writer, was published . . . The organization of Boston and the surrounding cities and towns in a ‘federated metropolis’ as a civic entity was advocated, giving a unified administration for various functions of collective concern . . . Soon after the appearance of ‘Greater Boston’ . . . the writer met his friend Charles Eliot, the young landscape architect. Eliot, enthusiastic about the suggested metropolitan park system, proposed that they work together for realizing it.” I am grateful to Karl Haglund for sharing his research on Sylvester Baxter.
- <sup>31</sup> Charles Eliot to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., October 6, 1892, Charles Eliot Papers, Special Collections, Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University; CELA, 381. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., was familiar with Eliot’s professional credentials, having approached him in the fall of 1890 to advise on the development of a new town at Garfield, Utah, for the Union Pacific Railroad, of which Adams was the president from 1884 to 1890.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 367, 662.
- <sup>33</sup> *Vegetation and Scenery in the Metropolitan Reservations of Boston: A Forestry Report written by Charles Eliot and submitted to the Metropolitan Park Commission, February 15, 1897* (Boston, 1898).
- <sup>34</sup> For further information on Revere Beach, see Keith N. Morgan, Revere Beach National Historic Landmark nomination report, National Park Service, 2003. Revere Beach was made a National Historic Landmark on July 24, 2004.
- <sup>35</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the Charles River Basin, see Karl Haglund, *Inventing the Charles River* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003), *passim*.
- <sup>36</sup> I am grateful to Gert Groening for bringing to my attention his essay on the relationship between the Alster Basin and the Charles River Basin. Gert Groening, “Das Charles River Basin in Boston und die Alster in Hamburg: Über die Fruchtbarkeit internationalen Austauschs bei der Konzeption einer Stadtlandschaft,” *Beiträge zur räumlichen Planung* 50 (1999): 193–215.
- <sup>37</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted to partners, October 28, 1893, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau uprooted more than a few trees in his quest to build a paradise on earth in Germany. With tributes to an Abyssinian slave girl, artificial lakes, and a predilection for pyramids, this princeling transformed a dreary palace into an Orientalist fantasy. Finally his estate is open to the public. Walking along them, it becomes clear that Pückler composed the landscape as a painter would, creating meticulously staged vistas. Red maples, chestnuts, spruces, ashes, and oaks are skillfully arranged to achieve splashes of color, light, and shadow. In the gloomy foyer hang portraits of Pückler's blue-blooded forebears; the adjacent rooms are more lively, lined with exhibits documenting his antic life. Landscape architecture was also differentiated as a profession in the United States. Though their influence on landscape architecture may be great, this list precludes gardeners, botanists, writers, theoreticians, ecologists, artists, and others who did not practice landscape design at a site scale and were not trained as a historical 'landscape gardener' or contemporary 'landscape architect.'

Carvalho Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier Baron Haussmann  
Gertrude Jekyll Joseph Forsyth Johnson Georg Kuphaldt George Loddiges John Claudius Loudon William Andrews Nesfield Joseph Paxton Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau William Robinson Henry Winthrop Sargent 20th century y y y y y y y y Daniel Burnham Horace Cleveland Andrew Jackson Downing Charles Eliot Beatrix