

Frederick Law Olmsted on Staten Island Discovery Map

Source Guide

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Front Cover Description

This guide illustrates some of the Staten Island locations associated with the life of pioneering landscape architect, author and social reformer, Frederick Law Olmsted (1). In 1848-1855, when Olmsted lived here as a farmer, Staten Island was not yet a part of N.Y.C. Instead, it consisted of the four independent towns that made up Richmond County (2) (population in 1850: 15,061) (3). Olmsted's farm was located in the town of Southfield on the shore of Raritan Bay (4). Today, his home's neighborhood is known as Eltingville (5).

1. "The Life & Times of American Landscape Architect Frederick Law Olmsted." *Olmsted 200*, olmsted200.org. <https://olmsted200.org/frederick-law-olmsted/life/>
2. Dripps, Matthew. *Map of Staten Island or Richmond County*. 1850.
3. U.S. Census Bureau (1850). Population of Places Included in the Census of 1850.
4. See: Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Map of Staten Island, or Richmond County, New York" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1853. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/bb112759-d5d6-5e42-e040-e00a1806410f>
5. See: Morris, Ira K. *Morris' Memorial History of Staten Island*. 1898. vol. 1, p. 484.

Staten Island Map Guide

1. Rossville Olmsted took the "Brunswick Boat" ferry from here to Manhattan (1). He also landscaped the Rossville estate of Henry Mason (2).

1. Letters:

- John H. Olmsted to Unknown, March 1848
- F.L.O to Frederick Kingsbury, May 10, 1848

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

2. *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*. Vol 55 (1924): pg. 222

2. Cole's Store & Post Office This store served as Olmsted's post office beginning in 1849 (1). It is also where he shopped. It was located on the corner of Amboy and Annadale Road (2).

1. Letter: F.L.O to Frederick Kingsbury, July 7, 1849

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

2. Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Map of Staten Island, or Richmond County, New York" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1853. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/bb112759-d5d6-5e42-e040-e00a1806410f>

See also:

Walling, H.F. *New York City and Environs*. S.D. Tilden, 1860,

www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~200181~3000106:New-York-City-and-Environs-?sort=pub_list_no_initialsort%2Cpub_date%2Cpub_list_no%2Cseries_no&qvq=q:1860

[%20staten%20island;sort:pub_list_no_initialsort%2Cpub_date%2Cpub_list_no%2Cseries_no;lc:RUMSEY~8~1&mi=1&trs=2.](#)

3. Tosomock Farm Olmsted lived on this 130-acre farm in Eltingville from 1848 to 1855 (1).

His father purchased it for him in 1848 for \$13,000 (1).

1. Martin, Justin. "Olmsted's Staten Island Farm." *The Cultural Landscape Foundation*, 3 Jan. 2019, <https://tclf.org/olmsted-staten-island-farm>

See also:

Letter: John H. Olmsted to Unknown, March 1848

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

4. Richmondtown This was the county seat of Staten Island in Olmsted's day (1).

1. "Main Village." *Historic Richmond Town*, www.historicrichmondtown.org/mainvillage.

5. Vanderbilt Mausoleum The Vanderbilt Family Mausoleum is located in Vanderbilt Cemetery, adjacent to Moravian Cemetery (1). Olmsted landscaped the grounds from 1884 to 1887 (2).

1. "Vanderbilt Family Cemetery and Mausoleum in New Dorp, New York - Find a Grave Cemetery." *www.findagrave.com*, www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2644640/vanderbilt-family-cemetery-and-mausoleum.
2. "Vanderbilt Mausoleum | HDC." *Hdc.org*, 16 Aug. 2018, hdc.org/buildings/vanderbilt-mausoleum/.

6. Vanderbilt Farm This was the home of William H. Vanderbilt, the oldest son of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt (1). Olmsted did some landscape work on this farm at Vanderbilt's request (2).

1. Bayles, Richard Mather. *History of Richmond County (Staten Island) New York, from Its Discovery to the Present Time*. 1887. p. 597
2. *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, the Formative Years*. 1977. Edited by Charles Capen McLaughlin and Charles E. Beveridge, Vol. 1, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 8,
babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951000354049c&view=2up&seq=33&skin=2021.

7. Clifton Berley Estate This was the 300-acre estate of Sir Roderick Cameron (1). Olmsted drew up plans for the estate grounds in the late 1880's. It was located on Fingerboard Road in Grasmere (2).

1. Bayles, Richard Mather. *History of Richmond County (Staten Island) New York, from Its Discovery to the Present Time*. 1887. p. 696
2. *STUDY of PLAN for IMPROVEMENT of HOME GROUNDS of "GRASSMERE" the RESIDENCE of SIR RODERICK CAMERON. CLIFTON, STATEN ISLAND, NY.*
Courtesy of the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service,
Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.
www.flickr.com/photos/olmsted_archives/51386420116/in/album-72157663397975013/.

8. Norwood Ave Frederick lived on Norwood Ave. (then called Amos St.) (1), in Rosebank with his family from 1866 until about 1872 (2). *

1. "Old-New Name Changes Staten Island, NY." *www.stevemorse.org*,
www.stevemorse.org/census/changes/StatenIslandChanges1.htm.
2. Olmsted Jr., Frederick Law, and Theodora Hubbard Kimball. *Frederick Law Olmsted, Landscape Architect, 1822–1903*. New York, London, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1922. p13, p16.

*Bonus Info: At the time Olmsted lived on Norwood Ave, he commuted by ferry to Brooklyn from Vanderbilt's Landing to work on Prospect Park (1).

See: Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Part of Stapleton & Clifton" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1874.

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-0b9d-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

9. Cazet Estate Wall It is thought that Olmsted built the wall in 1855 that once surrounded the Cazet estate on Grymes Hill. Notre Dame Academy now stands on part of the property. Parts of the wall still exist along both Victory Boulevard and Eddy Street (1).

1. Hine, Charles Gilbert. *History and Legend of Howard Avenue and the Serpentine Road, Grymes Hill, Staten Island*. 1914. Pg 43 – 46

10. Tompkinsville Landing Frederick, his brother John, and others often walked here from Tosomock Farm in order to take a ferry to N.Y.C. The walk was a distance of about 10 miles (1).

1. Letters:
 - John H Olmsted to Unknown, March 1848
 - F.L.O to Frederick Kingsbury, May 10, 1848
 - John H Olmsted to Frederick Kingsbury, April 2?, 1849

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

See also:

Morris, Ira K. *Morris' Memorial History of Staten Island*. 1898. vol. 1, p. 393.

11. Shaw Estate in the late 1860's, Olmsted did some landscape work on this Bard Avenue estate (1). This was the home of Robert Gould Shaw, who became commander of the nation's first all-Black regiment during the Civil War (2).

1. Letters:

- F.L.O to Charles Eliot Norton, Jan 11, 1867

Source: *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, The Years of Olmsted, Vaux & Company 1865-1874*. 1977. Edited by David Schuyler, Jane Turner Censer et al, Vol. 6,

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d005121488&view=2up&seq=194&skin=2021&q1=staten%20island>

- Francis George Shaw to F.L.O, Aug 17, 1867

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

See also:

Hine, Charles Gilbert. *Legends, Stories and Folklore of Old Staten Island*. 1925. Pg. 54.

2. Khomina, Anna. "First All-Black Regiment Authorized: On This Day, 1863". Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. *Www.gilderlehrman.org*,
www.gilderlehrman.org/news/first-all-black-regiment-authorized-day-1863

See also:

Hine, Charles Gilbert. *Legends, Stories and Folklore of Old Staten Island*. 1925. Pg. 51-52

“Tosomock Farm circa 1850” Map Guide

1. Woods In 1848 the 25 acres of Olmsted’s property that were closest to Amboy Road were covered in forest (1). It was described as a “pretty wood” of maple, sweet and sour gum, sassafras, holly and white oak (2).

1. Letters:

- John H. Olmsted to Unknown, March, 1848
- F.L.O to Frederick Kingsbury, May 10, 1848

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

2. Olmsted Jr., Frederick Law, and Theodora Hubbard Kimball. *Frederick Law Olmsted, Landscape Architect, 1822–1903*. New York, London, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1922. Pg 78.

2. Hay Field One year, 35 acres of hay were grown on the farm (1).

1. Undated crop list

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

3. Cultivated Land According to multiple accounts, most of the crops were grown between the house and the beach (1). Some of them included cabbage, tomatoes, corn, wheat and barley (2).

1. Mary Perkins Olmsted’s account of the farm from Theodora Hubbard Kimball’s original book notes.

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

See also: Letters

- John H. Olmsted to Frederick Kingsbury, April 2?, 1849
- John H. Olmsted to John Olmsted, June 19, 1854

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

2. Letters

- Frederick Law Olmsted to Frederick Kingsbury, Aug 5, 1851
- Frederick Law Olmsted to John H. Olmsted, March 16, 1848
- Frederick Law Olmsted to John Olmsted, June 25, 1849
- John H. Olmsted to Frederick Kingsbury, April 2?, 1849

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

4. **Barn** This was one of the many outbuildings on the property (1).

1. Letter: Frederick Law Olmsted to Frederick Kingsbury, May 10, 1848

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

See also:

Undated sketch of S.I farm layout (*shows a barn opposite the house on west side*)

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

Beers Atlas 1874 Maps:

Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Part of Westfield & Southfield" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1874.

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-0bb2-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Part of Southfield" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1874.

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-0bb3-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

5. Horse Pond According to a friend of Olmsted's, he turned this "very shabby" watering pond into an ornamental water feature by turfing its borders and planting water plants along its edge (1).

1. Olmsted Jr., Frederick Law, and Theodora Hubbard Kimball. *Frederick Law Olmsted, Landscape Architect, 1822–1903*. New York, London, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1922. Pp. 85-86

See also:

Undated sketch of S.I farm layout (*shows "Horse Pond" opposite the house on west side*)

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

6. Carriage House The illustration shows what the building looked like around 1850.

It was copied from a sketch drawn by Frederick's younger brother, John (1).

1. Letter: John H. Olmsted to Fanny Olmsted, May 6, 1855

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

See also:

Undated sketch of S.I farm layout

7. F.L.O's Trees Olmsted planted thousands of trees during his time at Tosomock farm (1), a few of which still stand. They include cedar of Lebanon trees (2).

1. Olmsted Jr., Frederick Law, and Theodora Hubbard Kimball. *Frederick Law Olmsted, Landscape Architect, 1822–1903*. New York, London, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1922. Pg. 62
2. “About Us.” *FRIENDS of OLMSTED-BEIL HOUSE*, olmstedbeilhouse.org/about-us/.

8. The House The illustration shows what the house looked like in 1848. It was copied from a sketch drawn by Frederick himself (1).

1. Olmsted’s sketch of his S.I farmhouse

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

9. Curved Driveway Olmsted rerouted the driveway so it approached the house at a graceful curve (1). A circular driveway is shown on an 1874 map (2).

1. Olmsted Jr., Frederick Law, and Theodora Hubbard Kimball. *Frederick Law Olmsted, Landscape Architect, 1822–1903*. New York, London, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1922. Pg. 86
2. Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Part of Westfield & Southfield" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1874.
<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-0bb2-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Part of Southfield" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1874.

10. Orchards The orchards were located 165 ft. from the shore (1) and covered 13 acres (2). There were pear, peach and quince trees (3). By 1857 there were over 2,000 pear trees alone in the orchards (4).

1. “Pears.” *Supplement to the Courant*, 1853, pp. 21–22.
2. Undated Crop List

Source: Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

3. Letters:

- Frederick Law Olmsted to John Olmsted, Oct 6, 1849
- Frederick Law Olmsted to John Olmsted, Nov 7, 1849
- John H. Olmsted to John Olmsted, Oct 5, 1855

Source: Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

4. Letter: John H. Olmsted to John Olmsted, Oct 5, 1855

Source: Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

11. Osage Orange Hedge In 1855 an Osage orange hedge was planted along this property line, bordering the orchards (1).

1. Letter: John H Olmsted to Bertha Olmsted, May 6, 1855

Source: Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

12. Dock Olmsted shipped his produce from his dock to sell at markets in N.Y.C (1).

Its exact location is unknown.

1. Boyle-Cullen, Margaret: "The Woods of Arden House," Parts I - II. *The Staten Island Historian* 14: 13, October - December 1953

13. Bathing House This structure shown on an 1853 map (1) could be the bathing house, which was located close to the shore (2).

1. Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Map of Staten Island, or Richmond County, New York" *The New York Public Library Digital*

Collections. 1853. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/bb112759-d5d6-5e42-e040-e00a1806410f>

2. Letters:

- John H. Olmsted to Mary Olmsted, Sept 20, 1848
- F.L.O to John Olmsted, June 25, 1848

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

14. Pear Tree According to an account by Frederick's wife, Mary Perkins Olmsted, there was an ancient pear tree located close to the shore (1). Its exact location is unknown.

1. Olmsted Jr., Frederick Law, and Theodora Hubbard Kimball. *Frederick Law Olmsted, Landscape Architect, 1822–1903*. New York, London, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1922. Pg 78

See also:

Letter: F.L.O to John Olmsted, Feb 24, 1852

Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers

Property Map References

The following maps were used to determine the property boundary of Olmsted's farm. The 1913 topographical map also helped to determine the location of hills, ponds and rivers on the property.

Beers Atlas 1874:

Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Part of Westfield & Southfield" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1874.

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-0bb2-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Part of Southfield" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1874.

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-0bb3-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Topographical Map (1913):

Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Sheet No. 85. [Includes (Green Ridge) Arden Avenue, Seaside Avenue, South Side Boulevard.]" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1906 - 1913.

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-62e0-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Sheet Nos. 92 & 96. [Sheet No. 92. Includes (Annadale) Woods of Arden Road and Southside Boulevard. - Sheet No. 96. Includes Huguenot Avenue, and Terra Marine Inn.]" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1906 - 1913.

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-62e6-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>