



ALLIANCE FOR HISTORIC LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION
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2017 Conference – Abstracts



The Alaska Highway Corridor: Nordicity Writ Large (paper)
Julie Harris, CAHP, Contentworks Inc.

The Alaska Highway Corridor is a linear landscape that crosses provincial, territorial, international and cultural boundaries from Dawson Creek, British Columbia to Delta Junction, Alaska, a distance of approximately 2,237 km (1,387 miles). The corridor is intersected by many Indigenous landscapes that are independent, historically and conceptually, from the highway. The highway itself serves as a main street that connects urban centres, First Nations communities, protected park lands, recreation areas, resource development sites and farmlands. The road is a busy supply lifeline; the region is a major tourism destination for the world. The Corridor’s cultural landscape is named after a single event that occurred in 1942 but its heritage value is due to forces and human experiences that stretch much further back in time and come forward into the latter part of the 20th century.

A project to document the landscape’s heritage value and seek formal acknowledgement of its cultural heritage value has exposed limitations in applying accepted cultural landscape theory drawn from World Heritage Sites practice to its description and definition. While theory doesn’t always matter as much as scholars and skilled professionals may like to think, the lag between theory and practice combined with the lack of understanding on the part of many southern decision-makers about northern conditions put a large, community-funded project at risk.

This presentation uses lessons learned from the Alaska Highway Heritage Project to explore the application of cultural landscape theory in the real world, protocols for documenting, acknowledging and respecting painful histories embedded in many northern landscapes, how nordicity factors can influence conventional readings of cultural landscapes, the importance of “community” in heritage, and the challenges of crossing international, provincial/territorial and Indigenous/local government boundaries in heritage practice.

Questions for discussion:

- How much do boundaries matter in defining a cultural landscape?
- When is a cultural landscape just too complex to acknowledge?
- Are formal heritage recognitions (designations and commemorations) worth the effort or should conservation return to its community roots?
- How should the Indigenous landscape/tourism paradox be addressed? The paradox being community desire to invest in tourism but the equally strong desire to keep the sacred places out of reach.

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Could UNESCO Consider Winnipeg's Elm Trees As World Heritage? A Radical Appeal for Mercy

Anna Thurmayr, Associate Professor, Dep. of Landscape Architecture, University of Manitoba

Many, if not all of us, will admit that it takes time to develop a passion for the city of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Dreadful winters, greedy mosquitoes make it easy to overlook the precious treasure of Winnipeg's magnificent stock of 8 million trees. The impressive canopy gives shape on the otherwise treeless plain, provides shelter from an extreme climate, raises property values and most of all forms the city's identity. Cities and people benefit greatly from an urban forest, and Winnipeg, Manitoba is especially blessed with the largest urban population of elm trees in North America. Planted almost a century ago, the elm still sensationally structures many of Winnipeg's unique streets and boulevards.

However, a recent survey undertaken by the City's Forestry has shown that this unique population of 230,000 elm trees requires further consideration than just addressing Dutch elm disease and the replacement of trees in boulevards. Over 5,000 American elms on average per year have been lost due to Dutch elm disease. Notably about 80% of these losses have taken place on private property and most of them have not been replaced.

Bearing witness to the near elimination in other cities and the historic American elm culture, Winnipeg has the chance to proactively engage in safe guarding its irreplaceable woodland. Special attention must be paid to tree planting and to regulations that avoid the destruction or injury of significant and healthy trees on private property. Many people are not yet aware of the private property issue, but the reality and the condition of the elm trees forces us to act responsibly.

Emphasizing the importance of Winnipeg's tree canopy for the city's identity and citizens' wellbeing, and drawing public attention to this silent topic, the author has been working on preservation proposals for several years. By applying a simple but effective trick, this presentation shows how the strict application of the selection criteria would result in only one conclusion: that the distinctive, declining resource gives enough reason to include Winnipeg in the UNESCO's World Heritage List. Such a status would provide Winnipeg's elm tree population with the reputation and recognition necessary to guarantee the sustainable conservation to safeguard them for future generations - regardless of growing on public or private ground.

Since a proposal like that stands in strong contrast to the city's reality the author expects a lively discussion about the perhaps naïve speculation. However, this debate will demonstrate the merits of and threats to Winnipeg's urban green spaces in order to recommend sustainable approaches for responsible political decisions. It is important to engage the public in this cultural landscape conservation discussion otherwise it is left to local initiatives or arborists.

This presentation will demonstrate how Winnipeg's outstanding green legacy is deserving of the most ambitious heritage protection. Winnipeg is blessed with the largest urban population of elm trees in North America and still has the chance to proactively engage in preserving its irreplaceable urban forest.



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Hiking & Biking & Bareback Riding at Gettysburg National Military Park (paper)

Danielle D. Desilets, RLA, Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture, Inc.

In 2014, the Nation Park Service identified a challenge with one of their iconic landscapes.

Gettysburg National Military Park – encompassing just under 6,000 acres – relied too heavily on automobiles. Visitors were asking for alternatives methods to experience the landscape.

The veterans of the Civil War’s bloodiest battle chose to commemorate the three-day battle by placing over 1,500 monuments and memorials on the essential battlefield locations. Additionally, the Park’s commemorative avenues delineate key battle lines which were also laid out by the battle’s survivors – a fact lost to many of today’s visitors who read them only as roads.

The purpose of the Gettysburg Battlefield Trails Master Plan is to change the way visitors experience the monumental landscape of Gettysburg National Military Park. Currently, visitors follow the epic battle story primarily on the Auto Tour: a vehicular route with stopping points at key moments. The master plan provides options for reducing reliance on automobiles through the expansion and enhancement of the existing limited trail system. By creating context-sensitive tour routes for multiple user types, the plan improves visitor access, convenience, and safety while closing interpretive gaps, and allowing different users to follow the story in ways that suit their desired experience. Added interpretive hubs give visitors options for exploring the vast battlefield in manageable zones rather than by the linear route alone. The master plan creates opportunities for visitors to more thoroughly discover and explore the monumental landscape. This reinterpretation of the Park is the latest step in the Park’s rehabilitation of the intricate palimpsest: a balance of the 1863 agrarian aesthetic, the layers of commemoration and honor, and the needs to a 21st century park.

Locating the proposed trail alignments required careful study of the Park’s resources, as well as the identification of miles of social trails – all of which had a reason for being. Guiding principles were developed to identify appropriate alignments to connect the stories of the 1863 battle, such as historic circulation patterns, routes of attack or retreat, as well as the protection of sensitive cultural and natural resources. The resulting plan provides visitors more opportunities to experience the park without an automobile by expanding the network of pedestrians, bicycle, and equestrian trails plus designated accessible routes. By adding trails and opportunities for interpretation, the master plan removes gaps in the historical interpretation of this Civil War battle, forming a more complete and rich visitor experience.

Commemorative avenues are more compellingly celebrated with the accommodation of shared-use lanes, and avenues missing from existing infrastructure are reintroduced as pedestrian routes as appropriate.

Questions for discussion: How to incorporate the adjacent Eisenhower National Historic Site, another 700 acres of agrarian landscape? How do you design for universal accessibility on hallowed ground? How do various modern user types (i.e. coach buses, mopeds) impact the significant cultural landscape?

An exploration of Soundscape: Part of our Cultural Heritage (work in progress)

Emma TarBush, 3rd year MLA Candidate, University of Guelph

After being involved with the development of a new tourism route for the west coast of Cape Breton, called Canada's Musical Coast, I noted the fact that the majority of site analyses were based on visual and physical aspects of each site; there was little investigation into the existing soundscapes and how sounds might influence design decisions. Most of us know that sound has an enormous effect on how we experience and interact with the environment and can provide us with crucial information about our surroundings. Yet, we spend little



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The goal of my thesis research is to explore how soundscape design can influence and shape the relationships people have with an environment. The aim is to create a comprehensive design for a beach site in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia that integrates and enhances existing cultural soundscapes.

In order to provide direction and context for the site design, research was conducted regarding regional cultural heritage as well as a cross-disciplinary literature review which contrasts different areas of study relating to sound research. These studies include acoustic ecology, psychoacoustics, sociology, sound art, music and acoustic communication.

Data was collected through qualitative research methods, which included soundwalks, focus groups and on-site observations. The investigation provided direction for conducting soundscape analysis and creating a site design.

In conclusion, this thesis indicates the importance of soundscape evaluation during the site design process and encourages people to think more about the management, design and protection of unique cultural soundscapes.

Questions for discussion:

How familiar are you with the topic of soundscape design? (for example Lee Lifeson Park in Toronto, Ontario and Miami Beach Soundscape)

Do you think sounds in the landscape can hold cultural heritage value?

Can you think of any newly designed spaces in the area in which you live or have visited where sounds contribute positively to the space?

Can you name a built environment where sounds impact your experience in a negative way?

Have you witnessed any changes in the natural soundscape where you reside?

How can we manage and protect our cultural soundscapes?



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Friday, May 26

Cultivated Landscapes and Prairie Transitions: About the Difficult Task to Manage Water on a Chessboard (paper)

Dietmar Straub, Associate Professor, Dep. of Landscape Architecture, University of Manitoba

Landscapes are laden with a whole host of interests and expectations. There are conflicts between various interests and many protagonists are involved. In a nutshell, the conflict can be described as the old dispute between economy and ecology.

Almost all projects in landscape architecture and urban design involve storm water and the application of a wide range of different strategies, methods and techniques of managing it. One of the lessons the author has learned in more than 20 years 'practicing with water': treat this precious resource well right on place! This journey with water begins in the prairies. Water retention and water purification have a key role.

Manitoba is famous for its wheat, its water and its horizon. Fertile soils and thousands of creeks, rivers and lakes in seemingly endless plains are sources of food and energy and thus also a mainspring of the economy in this Canadian province. Today we reap the hugely negative long-term environmental impacts caused by industrial farming. Lake Winnipeg is listed among the most eutrophic lakes in the world and Winnipeg, a city in the midst of the Red River Lowland, is a particularly wet place with annual periodic flood issues. Knowing the history of the conversion of wet prairie into industrial farmland makes one understand ecological consequences on a large scale.

Designing with the wet in the prairie describes a specific research interest which embraces the entire urban and rural area without regard for municipal boundaries. Topics of discussion and investigation are: The role of landscape architecture when dealing with industrial farming and watersheds; drainage systems and environmental history; agriculture and deforestation; ecology and economy; plug and prairie; private and common; and chessboards and topography. A series of design studios taught by the author focused on these water issues. The studio journey always started at the Red River, continued along the Rat River and led step by step into the finest branches of the prairie vessel system. The watershed of the Rat River became a research laboratory for retention and purification prototypes. The illustrations in this presentation create access to inspiring and engaging examples of landscape design in the prairie highlighting the value of good landscape design in creating and sustaining vibrant cultural landscapes.

The fertile lands in southern Manitoba are both a blessing and a curse. Treating 'water well right on place' means for a city like Winnipeg to consider agricultural land not only for food production – certainly a sensitive topic since farmers have a strong lobby in Manitoba. Nevertheless the environmental impacts crying out to finding acceptable solutions on the issues and landscape architects can play a key role in this.



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Empire Ranch: A History of Landscape Preservation in the Arizona/Sonora Desert Grasslands (paper)

Gina Chorover, Assistant Lecturer, Landscape Architecture, University of Arizona

Helen Erickson, Adjunct Lecturer, Planning, University of Arizona

The story of the Empire Ranch is inextricably linked to the arid landscape of Southeastern Arizona, where as early as the 1820s, in spite of the threat of hostile Apaches, Mexican and Anglo, ranchers began to run cattle on its lush grasslands. The original 160 acres on Empire Gulch, a tributary of Ciénega Creek, was sited near an essential perennial water source. Subsequent aggressive acquisition of strategic water rights by entrepreneurial owners enabled the expansion of ranch holdings to over 100,000 acres by 1906. Without control of water sources, the land was useless.

Historic owners made forward-thinking efforts to limit the negative impacts of ranching. While other ranchers overgrazed their land, and consequently suffered from soil erosion and the invasion of unproductive vegetation such as juniper, the owners of the Empire Ranch practiced pasture rotation, permitting the grassland to regenerate. They were also among the first to introduce Holstein cattle to Southern Arizona, increasing the quality of the herd. This in turn made it possible to reduce the total number of cattle per acre of graze. Intelligent use of natural resources led to healthy stock and financial success.

With the industrialization of ranching in the mid twentieth century, however, it became difficult to maintain the ranch as a family enterprise, and the property was subsequently held by corporations more interested in mining and real estate development than in ranching. But by the 1980s, the surrounding community had come to recognize the historic and ecological importance of the property. A non-profit organization was created to preserve and maintain the historic ranch headquarters, and a series of land exchanges enabled the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to dedicate 42,000 acres as the Las Ciénegas National Conservation Area. Under BLM management, a century and a half of environmental respect continues with active ranching under careful oversight to preserve natural and cultural resources while providing opportunities for public recreation.

Main points include:

The two families who successively owned this ranch played a significant role in the development of cattle ranching in Southern Arizona.

Land acquisition based on obtaining water rights illustrates the general practice of ranching in the desert grasslands. Current ownership emphasizes conservation, restoration and interpretation of a working landscape through a public/private partnership.

As one of the few remaining perennial water courses in Arizona, Ciénega Creek supports a diverse plant and animal community and offers a glimpse of the natural landscape encountered by nineteenth-century settlers.

Questions for discussion:

How did the Empire Ranch continue to thrive for a century and a half while many other ranches in the same area failed?

How do ecological conservation advocates and historic preservation advocates collaborate to preserve a historic landscape?

How will coming climate change and the possibility of a falling water table impact this historic resource?



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Cultural Identity and Post-industrial Sites in Brazil: “Valley of Death” or Cultural Landscape? (paper)

Luciana Saboia, Professor, Architecture and Urbanism, University of Brasilia, and Visiting Researcher, Dep. of Landscape Architecture, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University

Celma Souza, Ph. D student, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, University of Brasilia

Industrial sites have marked major turning point in natural and cultural environments since XVIII century Industrial Revolution. These historical areas includes today a reveal of a tangible heritage and, moreover, cultural implications of urban changes and redevelopments. In Brazil, the Baixada Santista region, central coast basin of the State of São Paulo, figures as a major landscape and industrial hub connecting the metropolitan area of São Paulo to the Atlantic Ocean. Since colonial times in the XVI century, place already inhabited by the first aboriginals in Brazil, this region remained as a bond between coast to hinterland, offering a network of railway and road infrastructures in the XIX century. Besides, the natural scenery formed by the Serra do Mar mountain range is characterized as a natural barrier with over 700 feet tall, and by a rich fauna and flora of the Atlantic Forest, typical of the Brazilian tropical climate.

Despite the natural fragileness, between the years 1920-1970, about 24 large industries based in energy, steel and petrochemicals were built in Cubatao, city part of the Santos’ basin. The huge chimneys and the large-scale buildings contrasted and contradicted the striking natural landscape of the mountain range. Such accelerated process of industrialization without any concerns about urban planning and environmental aspects made Cubatao to be known as the “Valley of Death”, the most polluted Brazilian city in the 1980s.

In order to analysis physical and cultural (*re*) configurations of Baixada Santista post-industrial site, this paper explore the cultural concept of “The South” debating notions and concepts of Brazilian Identity (Ricoeur, Santos). The research focus on remained landmarks of industrial heritage in the region with its surroundings. The aim is to understand the social interaction of the industrial legacy, tangible aspects, and intangible aspects of historical and social appropriation. This scene birthplace of Brazil’s national Atlantic Forest that is almost decimated encourages to discuss how industrial landscape sites can improve sustainable development and identity preservation.



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Island Experience: Documenting a Cultural Landscape (paper)

Debbie Dietrich-Smith, National Park Service/NCPTT

What do you get when you combine landscape architects, architects, and other preservation professionals on an island in northern Minnesota for a week? You get a unique experience documenting a cultural landscape. This project brought together ten volunteers from private practice, academia, and the National Park Service to document Mallard Island, located in Rainy Lake about a mile from the US/Canadian border. The acre-and-a-half island was the home of Ernest Oberholtzer, a 1907 Harvard graduate with training in landscape architecture and a conservationist who fought to protect the boundary waters connecting the two countries. The island landscape dates to the early 1920s, with construction projects extending into the 1950s. Oberholtzer welcomed friends to the island each summer ranging from the local Ojibwe to the social elite. Managed and maintained today by the Ernest C. Oberholtzer Foundation, the island and its rustic buildings continue to welcome small groups each summer much as Oberholtzer did during his lifetime.

The success of the documentation project relied on group cohesion and projects that engaged individual talents and interests. Building on the HALS MN-07 site plan, the group, which included six AHLPP members, refined the plan by further documenting the island's landscape and buildings through traditional and hi-tech methods. It also provided the Foundation with a report to the Minnesota SHPO that evaluated the condition of the cedar siding on Oberholtzer's 2 ½ story island residence. While significant documentation occurred on the island, the project continues. Sketch maps, GPS points, and 3D laser point clouds are being traced in AutoCadd, and underway is the development an extensive timeline and database documenting the evolution of the Island landscape.

Question for discussion:

What conditions made this experience unique?

Could this experience be a model for documenting other non-profit sites?



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Eviscerated Landscapes: A Plea for Geodiversity and Lost Natures

Dietmar Straub, Associate Professor, Dep. of Landscape Architecture, University of Manitoba

Landscapes have outstanding memories. Over millions of years sediments have been deposited, removed and deposited again. Winnipeg in Manitoba wouldn't exist without the sediments and deposits left by the vast oceans 450 million years ago. However very few people even know where the aggregates for their buildings, roads and squares were originally sourced. Even fewer have seen the resulting impact on the landscapes from the highly explosive charges. These landscapes are as near as they are distant. Unfamiliar. Mysterious. Alien. We can make this archive accessible layer by layer, decrypting history and stories that landscapes are recording.

The mining of mineral deposits in Manitoba is an important economic component that continues to grow. For almost 100 years, the unique geological formation of limestone has been extracted and processed near the town of Stonewall. To date approximately 22% of the 2900 hectare Rockwood quarry has been disturbed by mining. In order to secure access to this valuable resource, the Provincial Government's policies guarantee quarry operations in forthcoming years.

It is not clear how to deal with the remnants of these industrial operations. A round table has been set up to coordinate the different needs of quarry operators, landowners and farmers. This pro-active body has the openness to identify sustainable solutions with the objective of stimulating the self-healing powers of nature by attributing ecological value to a region that has been neglected.

The visual power of this eviscerated landscape and the inherent physical and sculptural qualities are impressive. In positioning interventions in the quarry, determining dimensions and designing new sediments, it is possible to review essential questions and, ultimately, to take individual positions to the task:

- Is it really possible or even desirable to rehabilitate this landscape?
- What visual forms might the newly emerging landscape take?
- Does the new landscape offer practical uses?

The author has joined the discussion, and has made everybody listen to the landscapes. Speculative drawings contribute to the dialogue by attributing ecological and aesthetic value after economical exploitation. The speculative designs showcase how eviscerated landscapes can increase the geodiversity of a whole region.

What mainly excites the author about landscapes is the invisible, the less obvious, and the hidden. As landscape architects and environmental designers we need to observe, explore, and discover. "You see what you have learned to see. The perception of landscape is a skill that has to be acquired. This applies to both historical and individual perception. Our culture has become capable of perceiving landscape due to the works of Roman poets, late Renaissance painters and English landscape gardeners who understood how to represent landscape. Thus landscape is a collectively known cultural heritage."¹

The big dream is to turn the Manitoban quarry district into a pilot region and a laboratory to test innovative concepts and new ideas, as well as becoming a centre of excellence for post-traumatized landscapes.

1 Burkardt, L. *Design = Unsichtbar*. Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1995, p.206, translated



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Saturday, May 27

Rehabilitation Design of the Historic Taos Plaza (paper)

Shelby Scharen, Mundus Bishop

The Taos plaza is a vernacular landscape set at the center of Taos, New Mexico. Initially established by the Spanish in the late 1700s, the plaza has been modified over the years to reflect changing politics, demographics, and corresponding architectural styles. Currently in a state of disrepair, the plaza fails to meet the needs of the community and visitors due to its dilapidated state and a 1970s redesign that segmented the plaza from adjacent urban fabric. The rehabilitation design for the Taos plaza was begun to revitalize the space and provide guidelines to preserve its historic integrity.

The Taos plaza is listed on the national register, is a key component of the Taos Downtown Historic District, and is the social and cultural heart of the town. Taos is a cultural mash-up, at the intersection of American Indian, Hispanic, and Anglo cultures, intermingled with thousands of annual visitors. Planning for the plaza needed to incorporate all voices into the process and included a core group of stakeholders and elders who reached out to others within their social circles.

The final treatment plan for the plaza includes rehabilitation of historic spatial patterns, views, and vegetation. Historic fabric, including adobe walls, will be preserved, while other features dating from the 1970s will be removed. Current-day needs will be accommodated to include walking paths, a new bandstand, and other contemporary site features (benches, artwork) that are of their own time.

Questions for discussion:

What alternative methods have you used to gather information from community members during your planning/design processes?

What places have you worked where there was a long period of vernacular design and redesign, and how do you bring forward the essence of that place?

How do we incorporate new designs that meet contemporary needs while preserving the past? What details of design honor history and which distract? I have this question all the time – it's about the details – when is a bench, planting box, statue, light post, etc. acceptable and when does it detract from the setting? How do we incorporate these new and needed elements into historic landscapes without mimicking the historic design but still be sensitive?

How do you reach out to the needs of visitors and how much does their opinion matter versus year-round residents?

How do we preserve historic places while ensuring that ecological goals are met? Taos is an arid climate, where having a lush bluegrass lawn doesn't make a whole lot of sense – but it's a historic feature. Related to that: How do we adapt historic spaces be sustainable?



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Lots of Space, Nowhere to Go (paper)

Juliana Morar, MLA Candidate, Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary

Alexia Caron-Roy, MLA Candidate, Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary

“When all is said and done, the best guarantee of a long and healthy life may be the connections you have with other people.” John Cacioppo, Neuroscientist, University of Chicago

With the implementation of the modern living standards, within less than a generation, Arctic settlements fundamentally changed their habitat organization, fragmenting an otherwise traditionally tight-knit community, where members consistently interacted with one another. Given the strong relationship between physical and mental well-being and human interaction and the sudden, drastic spatial gap that the new-found living comfort created within its members, this paper questions the opportunities for public social interaction in small, isolated, Arctic settlements.

Traditionally, settlement patterns in Arctic communities are strongly linked to seasonal variation, allowing them to survive the extreme climate changes throughout the year. During the summer months, Inuit groups spread-out across the landscape, constructing small and easily erected tents to facilitate travel while during the winter months, families would gather together into much larger households at a centralized location that is jointly used. Communal spaces are a key component in the community’s daily life, as they offered families the opportunity to interact and support each other. Often, houses are each connected to one-another and to these communal spaces, which reflected more than just the physical need to retain heat and conserve building materials and food. This clustered built environment is an expression of the importance of the communal life in Inuit societies. The arrival of the modern living setting, separated the families into individual dwellings, omitting in the transition the communal space.

While Architecture focused on ways to improve building comfort, thermal efficiency and construction costs, a deepening void was left in the realm of public places. Blamed on the high cost of construction in arctic regions, the only public place is often a building dedicated to multiple uses, such as arenas, school and community centers with strict opening hours. However, a healthy social life is based on free interaction where people occupy, appropriate and circulate freely through public space, often for no particular reason. Unfortunately, multi-use centres limit these activities, leaving less sociable, lonely community members isolated, with literally no place to go. Public places, as a socializing setting are crucial for the well-being of a society and a healthy society cannot function without a common ground, a place to meet, a place that encourages and facilitates human interaction, promotes social equity and tolerance. So, naturally, the question arises, in the absence of the traditional communal space, where do people socialize? What happened with this strong, cultural element?

It is time that the traditional form of public place be reinterpreted for an innovative, sustainable solution, adapted to the current realities of isolated arctic settlements, creating a setting where people can function accordingly to their culture, traditions and values.



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“Gardens, Highways, and Beauty Spots”: An Examination of Atlanta Ladies’ Garden Club Projects in the Early Twentieth Century (paper)

Stephanie N. Bryan, PhD student, Emory University

In the 1920s and 1930s, garden clubs began forming throughout Atlanta in conjunction with the rapid growth of the city and its neighboring residential communities. These were part of a larger Garden Club Movement in America. Each club had a slightly different statement of purpose, although all generally endeavored to stimulate gardening knowledge, encourage civic planting, and to aid in conservation work. The members of these clubs were an elite class of predominantly women, who leveraged their power to improve their physical and social environments. In this paper, I will explore how the Atlanta garden clubs worked toward this goal by leading campaigns, establishing private and public greenspaces, working to conserve natural resources, helping to enact legislation, disseminating knowledge, and inspiring stewardship. In the process, I will consider some of the various motivations driving their projects, which range from competitiveness between residents to a desire to attract tourists and stimulate the local economy. While garden clubs undoubtedly served a civic purpose, I aim to show how they also were mechanisms for the reification of class and social status.

In this paper, I will use the specific examples of these early garden club projects in Atlanta to explore how such landscapes contribute to idealism and identity. I will describe how the garden club members’ country estates were an attempt to create an ideal home. Their neighborhood gardens and parks, an ideal community. Their civic and charity work, an ideal city. Their conservation of natural resources and highway beautification, an ideal state. Their education and inspiration, an idealized future. Additionally, I will show how much of these garden clubs’ work was an attempt to construct Atlanta in a manner that blended progressive reforms with certain antebellum ideals, thereby shaping the city’s identity. This identity is still visible today in remnant fragments of this cultural landscape. I will conclude this paper by briefly identifying some of these sites that have been lost to development, as well as others, like the Iris Garden at Winn Park and the bird sanctuary at the Lullwater Conservation Garden, that remain intact. While individual sites certainly can be preserved for future generations, one of the biggest challenges lies in the preservation of a culture that is slowly fading away.