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## CHAPTER XXII

# ARCHITECTS OF THE CAPITOL EXTENSION

THOMAS USTICK WALTER.

[Plates 315, 316.]

**M**R. WALTER was born in Philadelphia September 4, 1804, of Joseph S. and Deborah Walter, and was named after Rev. Thomas Ustick, a well-known divine in the early part of the past century. He had a good education and showed proficiency in mathematics. In 1819 he entered the office of William Strickland, a prominent architect of that day. After the study of mechanical drawing he left Strickland, and for seven years studied mathematics, physics, drawing, painting, construction, and landscape painting, the latter branch under an artist named Mason. In the year 1828 he again entered the office of Strickland and devoted himself exclusively to the study of architecture for two years. He commenced the practice of architecture in 1830 and was appointed architect of the Philadelphia County Prison October 14, 1831. His design for the Girard College for Orphans was adopted in 1833. This work was carried out under his supervision, being finished in 1847. Upon the completion of the building he was elected one of the directors of the college and served three years. During the year 1838 he was sent abroad by the Girard trustees to study the various European seats of learning. On this trip he visited England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, France, and Italy.

Mr. Walter was a pioneer and active promoter in starting an association entitled "The American Institution of Architecture," being elected secretary at its organization March 22, 1837. The good-fellowship of the profession at this period was not sufficient to keep this association together for any length of time.

In the year 1843 Mr. Walter was invited by the Government of Venezuela to examine the port of La Guaira, with a view to constructing a breakwater to protect the harbor and facilitate the discharge of cargoes. After visiting the country he prepared drawings and specifications for the work, which was completed October 24, 1845.

His connection with the Capitol building has been described in other portions of this book. While acting as Architect of the Capitol he designed the east and west wings of the Patent Office, the extension of the General Post-Office, the north, south, and west fronts of the United States Treasury building, the marine barracks at Brooklyn and Pensacola, and the Government Hospital for the Insane, at Washington. Upon his appointment as Architect of the Capitol in 1851 he moved his family to Washington, where they remained until 1865, when his connection with the building ceased and he returned to Philadelphia. Before coming to Washington he had a large private practice in Philadelphia, designing many public and private buildings in that city and other parts of the country. In 1849 he received the honorary degree of master of arts from Madison University, New York; in 1853 that of doctor of philosophy from the University of Lewisburg, Pa.; and that of doctor of laws from Harvard in 1857. Mr. Walter held the professorship of architecture in the Franklin Institute, of which he was a member from 1829 until his death, and delivered many lectures on architecture in Philadelphia and Washington. Among the notable articles by him which appeared in the Journal of the Franklin Institute may be mentioned "Architecture in the Middle Ages," "Formation of an Artificial Spectrum," "Orders of Architecture," and descriptions of the county



THOMAS U. WALTER, ARCHITECT.  
Portrait of Walter, ca. 1857. AIA Archives.



THOMAS U. WALTER, ARCHITECT.  
Photograph of Walter, ca. 1885. *AIA Archives*.

prison and Girard College. He was a member of the American Philosophical Society for a period of thirty years. He was one of the founders of the American Institute of Architects, in 1857, and was elected its second president upon the death of Richard Upjohn, serving from 1877 to 1887. Upon leaving Washington Mr. Walter assisted John MacArthur on the new city hall in Philadelphia, holding the position until his death, October 30, 1887.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Walter, in his architectural designs, followed classical models, and his work showed well-studied plans, a dignity in mass, and a refinement in detail which give his buildings a quality that will be appreciated by the refined and cultured of the future. He was an indefatigable student and industrious worker until his death. He lent a willing hand and gave with zeal his time to any matter which tended to advance the profession of architecture, and endeared himself to all who came in contact with him by his genial social qualities.

As I remember him, his personal appearance was most striking—a large frame, with a strong and impressive face and head crowned with bushy white hair.

The principles upon which he acted during life are well expressed in the following extract with which he closed an address to the American Institute of Architects:

“We owe to our country, to the age in which we live, to our families, to ourselves, to devote the rapidly fleeting hours of our lives to the accomplishment of the greatest possible good in our vocation, ever seeking to discharge our duties in all good conscience toward those whose

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<sup>1</sup>Brown’s major sources for his biographical sketch of Walter included James Q. Howard, “The Architects of the American Capitol,” *International Review* 1 (November–December, 1874): 736–753; “T. U. Walter,” *Building News* [London] 24 (1883): 785; and George C. Mason, Jr., “Biographical Memoirs of Thomas U. Walter,” *Proceedings of the Twenty-second Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects* (New York: Oberhauser and Company, Printers, 1889), 101–108.

interests are intrusted to our care, toward coworkers in the realm of art, and toward Him in whom we live and move and have our being.”<sup>2</sup>

EDWARD CLARK.

[Plate 317.]

Edward Clark was born in Philadelphia August 15, 1822. He was the son of James Clark, an architect of that city, and his mother was a daughter of Capt. John Cottman, of the Revolutionary Army. He was educated at the public schools and academies of Philadelphia, but chiefly under the direction of his uncle, Thomas Clark, who was an engineer in the Army. He was instructed in mechanical and free-hand drawing by his father, and at an early age entered the office of Thomas U. Walter, being made superintendent of the construction of the extension of the Patent Office and General Post-Office when Mr. Walter was placed in charge of these buildings in 1851. In 1865, upon the resignation of Mr. Walter, he was appointed Architect of the Capitol.

During his long service in Washington Mr. Clark devoted himself almost exclusively to the special work in his charge, declining to enter into competition with architects in private practice, but giving his services freely to the many charitable and eleemosynary institutions of the District and elsewhere. He was invited by the board of commissioners to revise the plans of the State capitol of Iowa, which he did to their entire satisfaction.

At the time of his death Mr. Clark was the oldest member of the board of trustees of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, having served for many years as chairman of the committee on works of art, and having also been appointed chairman of a special committee to superintend the construction of the new gallery.

He was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects from 1888 to the time of his death, a member of the Clarendon Historical Society

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<sup>2</sup>Proceedings of the *Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects*, 1889.

of Edinburgh, and also a member of many scientific, musical, and literary societies.

Possessed of a remarkably retentive memory, a lover of books and music from his childhood, Mr. Clark was a most delightful companion. A collector of music for more than sixty years, he left what was probably the largest private collection in Washington.

He died in Washington on January 6, 1902, having been continuously employed on the architectural work of the Government for fifty-one years.<sup>3</sup>

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED.

[Plate 318.]

Mr. Olmsted was born in Hartford, Conn., April 26, 1822. He studied civil engineering three years, and later pursued scientific studies at Yale College. After this he was for two years a working student of agriculture, and then spent seven years as a farmer and horticulturist upon his own land. At this early period he was an ardent lover of natural scenery, and for the enjoyment of it made many journeys both in the saddle and on foot.

He made four trips to Europe, in each case giving special study to parks and pleasure grounds, public forests, zoological and botanical gardens, and the plans and manner of enlargement of towns and suburbs. Letters from and the advice of Prof. Asa Gray, A. J. Downing, and Sir William Hooker gave him special facilities for such study.

In 1853 and 1854 he was engaged in the study of the economical conditions of the slave States. In order to make close observations of rural details he traveled a distance of more than 4,000 miles in these States on horseback.

During the spring of 1857 he was appointed superintendent of the preparatory work of the projected Central Park of New York. The

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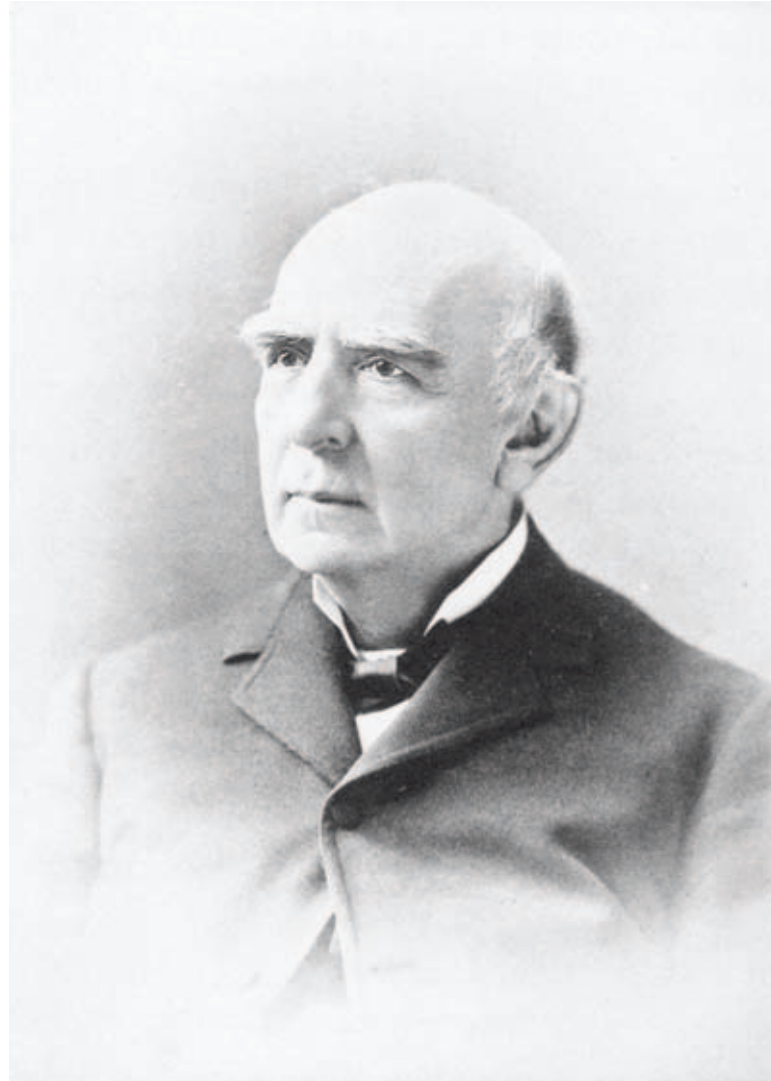
<sup>3</sup> "Obituary of Edward Clark," *Proceedings of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects* (Washington: Gibson Brothers, 1903), 249.

following fall, in association with Calvert Vaux, he devised a plan for this park which was selected as the most satisfactory of thirty-three plans submitted in competition, and the firm was employed to execute the work.

At the outbreak of the civil war in 1861 Mr. Olmsted was appointed by the President a member of the National Sanitary Commission, and was asked by his associates to take the duty of organizing and managing its executive business. In the fall of 1863, the work of the Commission having been fully developed and the successful accomplishment of its objects assured, he resigned the position and passed the next two years on the Pacific slope. He there served as chairman of the California State commission, taking the custody of the Yosemite and Mariposa reservations, ceded to the State by Congress as public parks. In 1865 he returned to New York and entered into partnership with Vaux & Withers upon the general practice of landscape architecture. In 1872 this partnership was dissolved, and he served for a time as president and treasurer of the park commission of New York, being afterwards their landscape architect for nearly six years. In 1878 he moved to Boston, and in 1884 took into partnership his son, John Charles Olmsted, and in 1889 Henry Sargent Codman, both of whom had received their professional training in his office, and had afterwards pursued studies in Europe under his advice.

Mr. Olmsted was employed upon upward of eighty public recreation grounds. He also had a large practice in the laying out of towns, suburban villa districts, and private grounds, and in the pursuit of this practice he visited every State in the Union. His work in connection with the Capitol has been described in other portions of this volume. He was the designer of the general scheme for the restoration and preservation of the natural scenery of Niagara Falls and, in association with Mr. Vaux, of the plan now being carried out by the State of New York for this purpose.





EDWARD CLARK, ARCHITECT.  
Photograph of Edward Clark, ca. 1895.



FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.

Photograph of Olmsted, ca. 1885. *National Park Service, Olmsted National Historic Site.*

Mr. Olmsted was the author of the following works: *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England*, first published in 1852, and several times reprinted, one edition having been prepared especially for the common school libraries of the State of Ohio; *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, 1856; *A Journey in Texas*, 1857; *A Journey in the Back Country*, 1861. Translations of *A Journey in Texas* have been published in Paris and Leipzig. At the outbreak of the civil war a compilation of the last three works was published in London under the title of *The Cotton Kingdom*, and was much quoted by those leaders of English public opinion who favored the northern view of the conflict.

In addition to the above books Mr. Olmsted wrote much on special problems of his profession, which is to be found in various periodicals and in printed reports of park commissions and other bodies.

Mr. Olmsted received the honorary degree of A.M. from Amherst College, and both A.M. and LL.D. from Harvard and Yale universities. He was an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects, the Boston Society of Architects, the London Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, and the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa. He was one of the founders and an honorary member of the Metropolitan Art Museum and the Union League, and an active member of the Century Club of New York and the St. Botolph Club of Boston, as well as many scientific and benevolent societies. He died August 28, 1903.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In his bibliography Brown did not cite any secondary sources for his biographical sketch of Olmsted. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., probably provided Brown with the information appearing here and in the discussion of Olmsted's design of the Capitol grounds. The younger Olmsted worked closely with Brown as a featured speaker at the American Institute of Architects's 1900 convention in Washington. Brown was well known to Olmsted as a key supporter of the Senate Park Commission after Olmsted was appointed to the board with Charles McKim, Daniel Burnham, and Augustus St. Gaudens in 1901.

LIST OF THE MORE NOTABLE PUBLIC OR SEMIPUBLIC GROUNDS FORMED OR FORMING MAINLY AFTER PLANS DEVISED BY FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED, AND GENERALLY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ONE OR ANOTHER OF THE FOLLOWING GENTLEMEN: CALVERT VAUX, JOHN C. OLMSTED, HENRY S. CODMAN, CHARLES ELIOT.

Public Parks: Central Park, Mount Morris Park, Riverside Park, and Morningside Park, New York; Prospect Park, Washington Park, Ocean Park, and Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; Washington Park and Jackson Park, Chicago; North Park, South Park, and Cazenovia Park, Buffalo; Seaside Park and Beardsley Park, Bridgeport, Conn.; Mount Royal, Montreal; The Fens, Muddy River Improvement, Jamaica Park, Arnold Arboretum, Franklin Park, Marine Park, Charlesbank, Beacon Parkway, Boston; Genesee Park, Seneca Park, Highland Park, Rochester; Belle Isle Park, Detroit; Cherokee Park, Shawnee Park, Iroquois Park, Louisville; Lake Park, West Side Park, River Park, Milwaukee; Washington Square, Baltimore.

Grounds of public and semipublic buildings: World's Columbian Exposition grounds, Chicago, Ill.; United States Capitol grounds, Washington; Statehouse grounds, Hartford, Conn.; capitol and city hall grounds, Buffalo, N.Y.; town hall, North Easton, Mass.; Schuylkill Arsenal grounds, Philadelphia, Pa.; grounds of insane hospital at Hartford, Conn., and at Buffalo, Poughkeepsie, and White Plains, N.Y.; Leake & Watts Orphan House, Yonkers, N.Y.; Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Washington.

Colleges: Amherst College, Amherst, Mass.; Yale University, New Haven, Conn.; Hamilton College, Clinton, N.Y.; College of New Jersey, Princeton, N.J.; Trinity College, Hartford, Conn.; University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt.; Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.; Massachusetts Agricultural College, Amherst, Mass.; Smith College, Northampton, Mass.; University of California, Berkeley, Cal.; Stanford University, Palo Alto, Cal.; Columbia University, New York, N.Y.; Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.; Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.



Grounds of railroad stations: Palmer, Auburndale, Chestnut Hill, and North Easton, Mass.

Schools: Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, N.J.; Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass.; Groton School, Groton, Mass.; Bryn Mawr School, Baltimore, Md.

Private places: Estates of George W. Vanderbilt, Biltmore, N.C.; J. C. Phillips, Beverly, Mass.; B. Schlesinger, J. H. White, Charles Storrow, and J. Randolph Coolidge, Brookline, Mass.; R. H. I. Goddard and H. G. Russell, Providence, R.I.; Wirt D. Walker, Pittsfield, Mass.; Whitelaw Reid, White Plains, N.Y.; J. J. Albright, Buffalo, N.Y.; J. M. Longyear, Marquette, Mich., and many others.

Suburban land divisions: Aspinwall Hill and Fisher Hill, Brookline, Mass.; Swampscott Land Trust, Swampscott, Mass.; Rocky Farm, etc., Newport, R.I.; Riverside, Chicago, Ill.; Berkeley, Cal.; Sudbrook Land Company, Baltimore, Md.; Depew, Buffalo, N.Y.; Log Cabin Farm, Detroit, Mich.

THOMAS WISEDELL.

[Plate 321.]

Mr. Wisedell was born in London September 28, 1846, and in early life became a pupil of Robert J. Withers, an architect. While still with Mr. Withers, his ability attracted the attention of Calvert Vaux, of

the firm of Vaux & Withers, of New York City, the latter of whom was a brother of the London architect. Mr. Vaux induced him to come to this country in 1868. For many years thereafter he was an assistant to Vaux & Withers, and in 1879 became a member of the firm of Kimball & Wisedell. Mr. Wisedell designed many public works and places of amusement. For eight or ten years he, under the direction of Frederick Law Olmsted, designed the architectural features of the improvements of the Capitol grounds at Washington. Among them was the terrace around the Capitol. He also designed the architectural work with Mr. Olmsted as the landscape architect of many other parks at various places in this country. The architectural work of Prospect Park, Brooklyn, is an example in point. In connection with Mr. Kimball, he designed and built many well-known theaters. Among these are the Madison Square Theater, Harrigan & Hart's Theater, and the Casino, at Broadway and Thirty-ninth street, in New York City; the Springfield Opera House at Springfield, Mass., and the Yonkers Opera House, Yonkers, N.Y. He died September 30, 1884.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Brown probably derived his information on Thomas Wisedell from interviews with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Edward Clark.