



## **FOR FACULTY & ADMIN Research Topics**

Olmsted scholar Charles Beveridge notes that “the extent of the firm’s role (after Olmsted Sr.) in shaping the landscape remains for the most part unexplored. While it is known that the firm undertook approximately 6,000 projects over a 100-year period, research has not been done to determine the role of the firm – how extensive the planning was, how much the design was carried out, what the present condition is and what additional documentary sources exist to guide the preservation and restoration process.”

There is much room to explore the design philosophy and professional practices of the firm and the approach of Olmsted and his successors in a whole range of issues – design concepts, construction practices, provision for long term growth and maintenance of plantings and relationship with practitioners in related fields among others.

### **Promote Olmsted Scholarship**

There are scores of possible research topics about Olmsted Sr. and the Olmsted firm that merit exploration. Possible research topics relating to Frederick Law Olmsted and the Olmsted firm can be found here:

### **Possible research topics on Frederick Law Olmsted**

- Examine the Port Royal Experiment and Olmsted’s thoughts about the integration of blacks into American society after the Civil War
- Explore Olmsted’s involvement with The Nation magazine and its views toward the Civil War, abolition and women’s rights.
- Explore the public health innovations of the US Sanitary Commission
- Examine Olmsted’s evolving attitudes toward slavery. What did Olmsted observe as being the effect of the presence of slavery on the major elements of the society of the slaveholding southern states? What did Olmsted see as the solution to the problem of slavery in the United States?
- Examine Olmsted’s collaboration with engineers and inclusion of engineering solutions in his commissions—including earth-shaping, drainage and sanitary engineering

- Explore Olmsted's collaboration with architects and instances of his doing architectural design and the principles he applied in this work
- Explore Olmsted's ideas about nature and public health.
- Explore How Olmsted and Vaux used painting to supplement their design proposals. Examine the proposals made for the Central Park Design competition.
- Identify a local FLO park and explore its design, history and use, and contribution to their communities. Explore and document the history of design, construction and maintenance, preservation, of an Olmsted park.
- What is Olmstedian? Compare the design of an FLO designed park with that of another U.S. designer: could include Golden Gate Park, Forest Park in St. Louis, Kessler Parks in Kansas City, or a park by HWS Cleveland in Minneapolis, or Druid Hill Park in Baltimore. What is the difference between FLO park designs and those of European parks? (in design elements and in intended social effect)
- What was Olmsted seeking to reserve/preserve in Yosemite Valley, and what is the history of management of Yosemite Reservation in years following his report?
- What was the effect of what Olmsted called the "Spoils of the Park" on the management of Central Park?