

## ***Researching Town Greens: A Resource Guide***

***by James Sexton, Ph. D.***

Researching and writing about greens is a difficult task. Not because there is so little to say, but because there is so much information available that needs to be synthesized to understand any single green well. A town's reaction to just about any national event or trend was, until recently, reflected in or on its green. A green can be a microcosm of the history of a town, region, or state. They are also reflective of intellectual trends within communities. New ideas, styles, or fashions which take hold are often represented on greens. One need only look at the variety of events and ideas discussed in the six case studies to see the range of opportunities for research that greens offer a scholar.

The topics which can grow out the study of a town green are remarkably divers. The primacy of religion in the colonial period can be seen in the dominant place of churches on most town greens. Interest, and support of, the Revolution was reflected in the liberty poles which appeared on many town greens. The legal disestablishment of the link between government and church can be seen in the moving of churches out of town greens. Legal and governmental questions can be addressed simply by looking at the question of the ownership of the green: it is not as simple as one might think. Architectural history can be discussed in relation to the buildings which surround town greens. The role of the Civil War in the lives of Connecticut's citizens can be seen by examining both the many musters which took place on greens as well as the memorials erected to those who fought in the war. Other types of commemorative sculpture could be examined by looking at the memorials raised on greens. The emergence of professional landscape architects, such as Frederick Law Olmsted, could be researched by looking at their impact on town greens. The Village Improvement Society movement is intimately linked to the re-emergence of interest in town greens, as is the Colonial Revival. The industrialization of the state is also a topic which could be studied through an examination of a town green. Town and city planning, such as the City Beautiful movement, are elements of the history of greens. And these ideas just scratch the surface. Greens have played a central role in the history of Connecticut. The study of a green can become a study of much larger issues.

But before one can begin discussing the larger issues of movement, trends, and the zeitgeist of a particular time one needs to fully understand the green being studied. This bibliography is intended as a starting point for this intellectual journey. It is not intended to be definitive. Instead, it should suggest points of departure. As each town is different, none of the resources or themes suggested here will work for all of the towns. Because greens can be viewed in so many different ways these texts range from general descriptions of landscape, landscape architecture, architectural history, and history, to works focusing specifically on Connecticut, specific counties, single towns, or, in rare cases, their greens. The material also covers a broad temporal spectrum, with examples from all four centuries of settlement in this area. It also exists in several media: writings, paintings, photographs, maps, prints. While many of these entries are related to specific towns, they do provide examples of the types of resources which can be used to understand the history of any green.

This bibliography is intended to be used with the six case-study green histories completed for the towns of Guilford, Litchfield, New Haven Norwich, Tolland, and Waterbury. (The case-studies can be found in the Document Center.) Using those as models and this as a guide to resources and a source of ideas, one can begin to write a history of any town green in

Connecticut. This guide is divided into two parts: a section on different types of sources, and a section on possible themes. The sources show the necessary resources to assemble a history of a green. They describe repositories, types of sources, research aids, and background material which will allow the construction of a full history of any green in the state. The themes suggest some of the ancillary issues which may be encountered while assembling the history and that will enliven a recounting of this story. In each case the lists are not intended to be comprehensive. Instead, they are a result of the experience gained researching and writing the six case-study green histories.

## *Sources*

### *Local Resources*

Local Historical Societies

Local Libraries

Town or City historians

Local Records: Land, Probate, and Court Documents

Goddard, George S. "Public Libraries and Records." *The History of Connecticut in Monographic Form*. Ed. Norris Galpin Osborn. (1928) Vol. V: 507-78.

Kemp, Thomas Jay. *Connecticut Researcher's Handbook*. Volume 12 in the Gale Genealogy and Local History Series. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1981.

Schnare, Robert E., Jr. *Local History Resources in a Connecticut: a Guide to their Use*. Darien: The Connecticut League of historical Societies, 1975.

Local resources, either historical societies or libraries (or preferably both), will provide the most specific information. These are the places and people who care the most about a single town's history. They are also the most likely place to find someone who has intimate knowledge of the writings on local history. Municipal historians can also be helpful.

Local records can be very useful. These provide contemporary evidence and examples of the way in which the green was used for the researcher who is willing to spend the time to read the sometimes difficult handwriting and extraneous material.

Goddard, the State Librarian at the turn of the century, provides an interesting explanation of the different types of documents available to someone researching local history in Connecticut. He also points out some of the pitfalls, such as the difficulty in finding probate information because there are 115 probate districts for 169 town. It is outdated for specifics, but an interesting read for someone who wants a flavor, and a primer, on local history research. Kemp and Schnare both provide guides, now perhaps somewhat outdated, to the local resources throughout the state of Connecticut. They are both, regardless of their dates of publication, an invaluable source for someone getting started in local history research.

### *State and National Repositories*

The Connecticut State Library (<http://www.cslnet.ctstateu.edu/index.htm>)

The Connecticut Historical Society (<http://www.chs.org/>)

The Yale University Library System (<http://www.library.yale.edu/>)

The New York Public Library (<http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/lhg/genea.html>)

The Library of Congress (<http://lcweb.loc.gov/index.html>)

Much of the information, especially the more obscure documents and periodicals, are not available within the same town as the green which is being studied. For these one must look to larger repositories. While each of these collections is much too extensive to sum up in a few sentences a few of the highlights will be mentioned. It is worth taking the time to investigate each of these repositories to see what they contain about the town and green which is being researched.

The State Library has the best collection of public documents (many of which are no longer available in the towns from which they came) and a strong collection of local histories. The Connecticut Historical Society also has a good collection of local histories as well as material from John Warner Barber, one of Connecticut's early gazetteers. The Yale Library system also contains many local histories, material from Barber, and an extensive collection of manuscripts document relating to Connecticut history. The New York Public Library and Library of Congress are also wonderful resources, although perhaps some what less accessible because of their locations. Fortunately all of these repositories provide some information over the Web; it is hoped that as time progresses this means of research will become more useful. (The New York Public Library and Library of Congress catalogs are also available in book form at larger libraries.)

*Bibliographies and Indices*

Collier, Christopher with Bonnie B. Collier. *The Literature of Connecticut History*. Vol. No. 6 of *Connecticut Scholar*. Middletown, Conn.: Connecticut Humanities Council, 1983.

Crofut, Florence S. Marcy. *Guide to the History and the Historic Sites of Connecticut*. (New Haven, 1937).

Parks, Roger, ed. *Connecticut: A Bibliography of its History*. Bibliographies of New England History. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986.

Stark, Bruce P. "A Guide to Connecticut History Bibliography." *Connecticut History* (July, 1979).

Another way to begin research is by examining bibliographies and indices. Consulting any of these bibliographies should give you an idea of what material is available for a specific town. None of them is totally complete. The more that are used, the greater the coverage that will result. The Parks bibliography is organized by town, providing a quick and easy way to find a majority of the works that cover any town in Connecticut. The Colliers bibliography is organized by subject. This allows one to answer questions on specific subjects as they arise during research

*State Histories*

There have been many histories of the state of Connecticut written. Each represents the point of view of a different author and time. The more of these that one can read, the broader an understanding of the state that can be achieved.

Beals, Carleton. *Our Yankee Heritage: New England's Contribution to American Civilization*. Freeport, N.Y.: 1955.

Bingham, Harold J. *History of Connecticut*. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1962. 4 vols.

Burpee, Charles Winslow. *The Story of Connecticut: Its People and Institutions*. New York: The American Historical Company, 1939.

Roth, David M. *Connecticut: A Bicentennial History*. New York: Norton, 1979.

Van Dusen, Albert E. *Connecticut*. New York: Random House, 1961.

Collier provides a thorough discussion of the merits of these, and other, state histories in his bibliography (pp. 17-29).

*Town and County Histories*

Beginning as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century Connecticut's native sons (and later daughters) have recorded the history of her towns and counties. (See, for example, the brief history of Guilford written by Thomas Ruggles, Jr. in February of 1769 in response to a request by Ezra Stiles.)<sup>1</sup> Since this date the history of Connecticut's towns and counties has been the subject of numerous publications. There are few, if any, towns for which some sort of history has not been written. The latest wave of these publications coincided with the country's bicentennial in 1976. The quality and reliability of these histories vary greatly, and ideas suggested by earlier writers are often repeated without question by later authors. Some of the authors also quote liberally from the town records but without providing full citations. Nonetheless, these histories are a valuable resource. Use them, but use them carefully. The best guide to these is the Parks bibliography.

A second type of town history emerged in the early 1960s, generally called community studies. These were written by professional historians and often relied on detailed statistical studies of population, kinship, and wealth. They also tended to focus on the colonial era. These provide a diligent researcher with a wealth of information and conclusions that would not be available elsewhere. As many of them are the result of graduate work, and may not be published, *Dissertation Abstracts International* may be the best resource for finding them. *Connecticut History* also published lists of theses with Connecticut subjects for many years. Finally, many are mentioned in Collier (pp. 63-65)

*Personal Accounts, Oral Histories, and Interviews*

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<sup>1</sup> "Editorial Note Respecting Ruggles's History of Guilford," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* Vol. X (1809): 90.

First person descriptions of a green at a moment in the past are invaluable, especially if they come from a local resident. They are also often difficult to find. Personal accounts, such as diaries, of local residents can provide a sense of how the greens were viewed by the people who saw, and used, them everyday. They often provide the anecdotes that liven up historical writing. Finding a personal account, unless it has already been published, is usually a matter of serendipity. Some diaries and papers may have been donated to a local library, or a larger repository such as Yale or the State Library may have collected them. Many are still in private hands. Larger libraries are also likely to have copies of published bibliographies of diaries and other manuscript sources such as the following:

Arksey, Laura and Nancy Pries. *American Diaries : an Annotated Bibliography of Published American Diaries and Journals*. Detroit, Mich.: Gale Research, c1983.

Forbes, Harriette. *New England Diaries, 1620-1800: A Descriptive Catalog of Diaries, Orderly Books and Sea Journals*. Topsfield, Mass.: privately printed, 1923.

Matthews, William. *American Diaries: An Annotated Bibliography of American Diaries Written Prior to the Year 1861*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945.

Matthews, William. *American Diaries in Manuscript, 1580-1954: A Descriptive Bibliography*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974.

McKinstry, E. Richard. *Personal Accounts of Events, Travels, and Everyday Life in America : An Annotated Bibliography*. Winterthur, Del. : Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, c1997.

Oral history projects have been a part of vernacular history since at least the 1930s. At that time the Federal Writers Project began a series of interviews which would ultimately result in the transcription of more than 10,000 oral histories. This form of information gathering regained popularity in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Where these exist they can provide wonderful information, although it is often enmeshed in remembrances which are not directly related to the history or development of a green.

Interviews require the most work. One must find longtime residents who are willing to share their time and memories. But they do allow one to direct the conversation to one's research topic, and can provide powerful support for one's argument. William Butler's arguments about the affect of the Colonial Revival on Litchfield are brought home by a comment recorded in an interview, "The village looked more colonial in 1930 than it *ever* did in the colonial era." (Butler, 23) This simple statement eloquently supported Butler's thesis.

#### *Contemporary Observations*

Barber, John Warner. *Connecticut Historical Collections, Containing a General Collection of Interesting Facts, Traditions, Biographical Sketches, Anecdotes, & c. Relating to the History and Antiquities of Every Town in Connecticut, with Geographical Descriptions*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Durrie & Peck and J.W. Barber, 1836 (Second Ed.).

- Buel, Richard, Jr. and J. Bard McNulty, ed. *Connecticut Observed: Three Centuries of Visitors' Impressions 1676-1940*. Hartford(?): The Acorn Club, 1991.
- Cantor, Jay E. *Landscape of Change: Photographic Archives*. Sturbridge, Mass.: Old Sturbridge Village, 1974-76.
- Cantor, Jay E. "The New England Landscape of Change." *Art in America* vol. 64.Number 1 (1976): 51-54.
- Gaines, Thomas A. "Going Places: The Compleat Village-Green-Watcher's Guide." *Historic Preservation* Vol. 36.No. 5 (October 1984) (1984): 70-75.
- Pease, John Chauncey. *A Gazetteer of the States of Connecticut and Rhode Island...* Hartford: W.S. Marsh, 1819.

These sources all provide "snapshots" of New England's greens. They differ from the personal accounts in that strangers to the community recorded them. While this distance can be seen as a weakness, as the authors often do not know the history of the town, these accounts are often improved by the writer's knowledge of other places. They are also likely to be less nostalgic than the memories of someone who had grown up in the community.

Barber and Pease provide contemporary views of Connecticut's towns during the early 19th century. Barber's work is enhanced by his famous views of towns during the early republic.

Buel and McNulty have collected traveler's' accounts of the state. While only some of these provide descriptions or references to greens, they do indicate a source of information that potentially would reward a diligent researcher. For example, specific greens might be mentioned in Timothy Dwight's *Travels in New England and New York*, Ezra Stiles's *Itineraries*, or the *Travels* of Madame Sarah Knight, to name but a few possibilities.

Cantor's work grew out of an exhibition at Sturbridge Village. It demonstrates the utility of examining visual resources in understanding the changes that have occurred throughout New England, including its greens, during the years covered.

Gaines distills the thoughts of a dedicated amateur critic about greens in modern New England. He highlights what he considers to be important elements in making a "successful" green, and also discusses some historical and preservation issues.

### *Town Planning Documents*

These documents, where available, can provide great insight into the way in which a community values its green. Even the existence or absence of a plan reveals something about the attitudes of a town toward its green. In those communities where multiple plans are available one can follow the changing values that the citizens attach to their green, as well as the way in which it has adapted to the changing needs of the community. More recent planning documents, such as those produced for Norwich and Tolland, have included sections on the history of the green. Town planning documents may also provide insight into the changes made to greens, such as the impact of the Village Improvement movement and Colonial Revival in Litchfield, or the City Beautiful Movement in Waterbury (and the planned, but not executed,

plans for New Haven.) Start by looking for these at Town Hall, if one's town has a planning department.

*General Histories of Greens*

Brodeur, David D. "Evolution of the New England Town Common: 1630-1966." *The Professional Geographer* Vol. XIX.Number 6 (November, 1967) (1967): 313-318.

Cushing, John D. "Town Commons of New England." *Old-Time New England* 51.Winter 1961 (1961): 86-92.

Dennis, Frederic S. *The Norfolk Village Green*. Privately Printed: 1917.

Fein, Albert. "The American City: The Ideal and the Real." *The Rise of an American Architecture*. Ed. Edgar Kaufman Jr. New York: Praeger Publishers in association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970. 51-111.

Kent, Louise Andrews. *Village Greens of New England*. New York: M. Barrows & Company, 1948.

Stilgoe, John R., Ph.D. "Town Common and Village Green in New England: 1620 to 1981." *On Common Ground: Caring for Shared Land From Town Common to Urban Park*. Ed. Ronald Lee and Lauri A. Halderman Fleming. Harvard, Mass.: The Harvard Common Press, 1981. 7-36.

These works all provide general histories of town greens in New England, with reference to specific ones throughout the region. Each tells generally the same story, in part because Brodeur, Cushing, Fein, and Stilgoe rely on the same sources. Dennis, while being a study of a specific green, also includes a chapter on the "Origins and Uses of the New England Village Green." Fein also gives an abbreviated account of the general history of greens, but places it within the context of the development of urban parks and amenities. Kent is the least scholarly of the group, as much an armchair travel guide as a serious history. Nonetheless, many of the same elements in the history of greens are mentioned throughout the text.

### *Non-Written Resources*

Because greens are three-dimensional artifacts in the landscape, much can be learned about them from examining non-written resources. Changes in the landscape can be discerned in a series of maps, photographs, paintings, and other visual material from different time periods. Something as simple, but important, as changes in the size of green can be garnered from these resources. The different ways in which greens were used can also be discerned by the objects that these materials show as being present on a green. Because so much about a green and the attitudes of a community toward it is based on appearance, visual materials are an important part of any research into a green.

### *Photographs*

The easiest visual resources to find and use are photographs. These may be collected in the local library or historical society, the private collections of longtime residents, or in the archives of the local paper. Often they are cataloged under the heading of something that happened on the green, rather than a heading dedicated to the green itself. Remember to look for events, such as town fairs, parades, or even high school graduations, which might have taken place on the green. Some larger libraries, such as Yale or The Library of Congress, have photographs cataloged in their collections. The existence of these can often be determined through on-line catalogs. In the case of The Library of Congress many of these are viewable on the world-wide web.

### *Maps*

Maps provide a way to monitor changes in the size and shape of the green as well as changes in its name (an important element in understanding how attitudes toward the space change.) Local libraries and historical societies often have a good collection of maps.

Thompson, Edmund. *Maps of Connecticut before the year 1800; a descriptive list.*  
(Windham, Conn., Hawthorn House, 1940.)

Thompson, Edmund. *Maps of Connecticut for the years of the industrial revolution, 1801-1860, a descriptive list.* (Windham, Conn.: Printed at Hawthorn House, 1942.)

The two volumes by Thompson provide a list of maps for the state prior to 1860. Although not comprehensive, the lists do provide a starting point for research into town maps in extra-local collections.

The Map Collection, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.  
(<http://www.library.yale.edu/MapColl/index.html>)

Geography and Map Division, The Library of Congress.  
(<http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/gmpage.html>).

Both of these large collections have many Connecticut maps, some of them unique. (In fact, most large libraries have some maps. It is simply a question of determining whether it is

worth a drive, or lengthy correspondence, to access these collections. Often it is. On-line catalogs have made this process easier.) One useful feature of the Library of Congress collection is that a number of their "Bird's-eye Maps" are viewable (and down-loadable) on the web. This is a boon to researchers who can not travel.

### *Paintings and Other Illustrations*

One other way to get a sense of what a green looked like at another time is to find paintings and other illustrations (such as prints) of the subject. This is a resource that has mixed rewards. For some towns, either because of the size and fame of the town or because of a prolific local artist, there are many images. For others there are none. The easiest ways to find these images are through local contacts who often know of their existence, by looking in local histories (where they are often used as illustrations), or for paintings (and other visual arts) by looking in the on-line Archives of American Art.

*Archives of American Art* (<http://www.si.edu/organiza/offices/archart/>)

This thorough listing of American paintings documents not only the existence of works, but also where the originals and reproductions can be found.

Barber, John Warner. *Connecticut Historical Collections, Containing a General Collection of Interesting Facts, Traditions, Biographical Sketches, Anecdotes, & c. Relating to the History and Antiquities of Every Town in Connecticut, with Geographical Descriptions*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Durrie & Peck and J.W. Barber, 1836 (Second Ed.).

The most famous (and most frequently reproduced) collection of images of Connecticut greens is those produced by John Warner Barber. They exist not only in their printed versions, but also as sketches in the collections of the Connecticut Historical Society and the Manuscripts and Archives Collection at Yale University's Sterling Memorial Library.

## *Themes*

The first step in writing about the history of a green is, of course, to document the events in the life of the green: its origin, subsequent changes, and its present appearance. What rapidly becomes apparent is that the story is more than that. Recounting the changes is simple; explaining the reasons for these changes is not. Greens reflect the spirit of their times. Because of this, writing about greens often turns into writing about many other things. Some of the themes that emerged during the writing of the six case studies are documented here, along with others that were encountered but not explored. These are intended only as examples. There are many more possible themes, and there are many useful texts on these themes which were not considered.

### *Ideology -- 17th and 18th Centuries*

Anonymous. "Essay on the Ordering of Towns." *Winthrop Papers*. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929-47. 3: 181.

Cronon, William. *Changes in the Land : Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* . New York : Hill and Wang, 1983.

Field, Jonathan Beecher. "'Peculiar Manuerance": Puritans, Indians, and the Rhetoric of Agriculture, 1629-1654," *Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife* 20 (1995) (1995): 12-24.

Garvan, Anthony N.B. *Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial Connecticut*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951.

Stilgoe, John R. "The Puritan Townscape: Ideal and Reality." *Landscape* Vol. 20.Number 3 (Spring 1976) (1976): 3-7.

St. George, Robert Blair. "'Set Thine House in Order": The Domestication of the Yeomanry in Seventeenth-Century New England." *New England Begins: The Seventeenth Century*. Ed. Jonathan L. and Robert F. Trent Fairbanks. Boston: The Museum of Fine Arts, 1982. Vol. II: 159-187.

One of the first conclusions one is likely to reach is that greens had strong cultural meanings for the early settlers. All six authors discuss the theoretical and theological underpinnings of early settlement patterns in New England and their effect on the landscape. Cronon also provides a sense of the ecological impact of settlement. Garvan and Stilgoe discuss town planning, with the former focusing on the classical roots of New Haven's unique plan, while the latter discusses town planning as a way to ensure morality. Field discusses cultivation as a means of civilizing the landscape, using as a focal point the same 17th century document, "The Ordering of Towns," as Stilgoe. St. George describes how the perceived dichotomy between the civilized and the natural affected the houses and homesteads of early settlers.

### *Ideology -- 19th and 20th Centuries*

Butler, William. "Another City Upon a Hill: Litchfield, Connecticut and the Colonial Revival." *The Colonial Revival in America*. Ed. Ian M.G. Quimby. Winterthur, 19.

Wood, Joseph S. "'Build, Therefor, Your Own World": The New England Village as Settlement Ideal." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 81.(1,1991): 32-50.

Wood, J.S. and M. Steinitz. "A world we have gained: house, common, and village in New England." *Journal of Historical Geography* 18.1(1992) (1992): 105-120.

The resurgence of interest in greens in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century also had a strong cultural underpinning. Wood, both in his work alone and with Michael Steinitz, discusses the 20th century perception of greens, and the way in which these are shaped by changes made in the 19th century. Both articles concentrate on the reinvention of New England's past to meet the needs of the turn of the century population, and the way in which this is represented in the landscape. Butler does the same thing, although with a focus on the single village of Litchfield.

*The Village Improvement Movement*

"A Village Improvement Association -- What Has Been Done in Litchfield, Ct." *American Agriculturist* XXXVII.no. 8 (February, 1878) (1878): 59.

Cloues, Richard Ross. "Where Art is Combined with Nature: Village Improvement in Nineteenth-Century New England." Dissertation. Cornell University, 1987.

Holland, Josiah D. "Village Improvement Societies." *Scribner's Monthly* 12 (September, 1876) 750-51.

"Village Improvement Societies." *Putnam's Magazine* .Sept., 1869 (1869): 359-366.

Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. *American Spaces: The Centennial Years, 1865-1876*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1972.

One manifestation of the upsurge in interest in greens in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was the birth of the Village Improvement Societies throughout the country. Jackson sets the stage for this, and other, changes across the American landscape in the years preceding the centennial. In Connecticut, the best-studied example of this phenomenon is the rebirth of Litchfield's green. Its present appearance is due, in large part, to the town's Village Improvement Society. Cloues provides a scholarly discussion of the origins of the Village Improvement movement. While he focuses on the society in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, Cloues does provide some information on Litchfield, as well as other Connecticut towns with Village Improvement Societies. He also includes an extensive bibliography.

The articles from *Scribner's Monthly* and *Putnam's Magazine* provide contemporary accounts and views of the phenomenon, while the article from the *American Agriculturist* provides a brief description of the work being done in Litchfield

*The Colonial Revival*

*Colonial Plans for Litchfield*. Village Improvement Association, [1903].

Bull, F. Kingsbury. *Letter to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.* 1913.

Butler, William. "Another City Upon a Hill: Litchfield, Connecticut and the Colonial Revival." *The Colonial Revival in America*. Ed. Alan Axelrod. New York: Norton, 1985.

Chamberlain, Samuel. *The New England Image*. New York: Hastings House, 1963.

Lincoln, Jeanie Gould. "The Historic Homes of Litchfield." *House & Garden* vol. 16.1909 (1909): 55-56, 98-99.

"Litchfield, New England Idyl." *House & Garden* vol 103. February, 1953 46-51, 118.

Meeks, Carroll L. V. "Lynx and Phoenix: Litchfield and Williamsburg." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* Vol. X.No. 4 (December, 1951) (1951): 18-23.

Olmsted, John C. *Letter to Mr. Seymour Cunningham*. 1913.

Peabody, Robert Swain. "Georgian Houses of New England." *American Architect and Building News* 2.October 20, 1877 (1877): 338.

Price, C. Matlack. "Historic Houses of Litchfield." *The White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs* Vol. V.no. 3 (June, 1919) (1919): 3-14.

Litchfield also provides a prime example of the impact of the Colonial Revival on a Connecticut town green. Butler's article provides a clear explanation of the forces at work in the transformation of the town and its green to their present appearance (including information on the Village Improvement Society). The other items show this transformation in progress, or the affect of it on the town's image. *The Colonial Plans for Litchfield* clearly delineate the intentions of the Village Improvement Society to alter the appearance of the downtown, and their reasons for doing so. The letters to and from Mr. Olmsted show this process in action. Peabody's article shows the beginning of interest in the country's historic buildings, demonstrating the roots of the Colonial Revival. The Lincoln, Price, Meeks, and second *House & Garden* articles show how the town captured and held the interest of the national press, both popular and professional.

*Landscape Architecture*

A discussion of changes to a green, especially in the second half of the 19th century or any part of the 20<sup>th</sup>, leads to the question of professional design. Have landscape architects redesigned the appearance of the green as they think it should be? The sense of propriety changes, as with any other art, depending on the era in which the changes were undertaken. There is little written on the general history of landscape architecture; more work has been done on the influential practitioners in the field.

Cutler, Phoebe. *The public landscape of the New Deal*. New Haven : Yale University Press, c1985.

Favretti, Rudy J. *Landscapes and gardens for historic buildings : a handbook for reproducing and creating authentic landscape settings*. Nashville : American Association for State and Local History, 1978.

Tishler, William H. *American landscape architecture : designers and places*. Building watchers series Washington, D.C. : Preservation Press, c1989.

Walker, Peter. *Invisible gardens : the search for modernism in the American landscape*. Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, c1994.

These texts provide an insight into basic landscape design history. The Tishler book is the most general, and is the only one intended as a true history of landscape design in this country. The Cutler and Walker books provide longer histories of specific moments in landscape architecture. The Favretti book provides a practical way into the problem of the history of landscape design; in order to recreate a period look one must understand it.

Major, Judith K. *To live in the New World : A.J. Downing and American landscape gardening*. Cambridge, Mass : The MIT Press, 1997.

Fein, Albert. *Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Environmental Tradition*. New York: G. Brazillier, 1972.

Hall, Lee. *Olmsted's America : An "Unpractical Man" and His Vision of Civilization*. Boston : Little, Brown, c1995.

Kelly, Bruce. *Art of the Olmsted landscape*. New York : New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission : Arts Publisher, c1981.

Moe, Christine. *Frederick Law Olmsted, Landscape Architect, Urban Planner*. Monticello, Ill.: Vance Bibliographies, 1979.

Roper, Laura Wood. *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.

Rybczynski, Witold. *A clearing in the distance : Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the nineteenth century*. New York : Scribner, 1999.

Van Rensselaer, Schuyler, Mrs., 1851-1934. *Accents as well as broad effects : writings on architecture, landscape, and the environment, 1876-1925, Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer*. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1996.

Fleming, Nancy. *Money, Manure & Maintenance : Ingredients for Successful Gardens of Marian Coffin, Pioneer Landscape Architect, 1876-1957*. Weston, Mass. : Country Place Books, 1995.

Much of the writing on landscape design has focused on the best-known designers. These books provide a sense of what is available. Olmsted is by far the most studied, and interest in him continues to the present. (Rybczynski's book was released in 1999.) Moe's bibliography is thorough now somewhat dated. One should also investigate the writings of each of these designers. The best approach when dealing with landscape architects is to be to look for references within the town and then pursue research about specific practitioners.

*Architecture*

In writing about greens one is continually running into references about buildings ranging from Sabbath day houses to townhouses, to the Pallisers and pallisadoes. Better understanding these terms allows one to see how those building on and around it understood the green. Buildings can reveal the ebb and flow of prosperity and change in a community. A great deal of building during a specific era suggests a moment of prosperity for the community; the absence of buildings of a certain style suggests a time of economic hardship. While an intensive education in the history of architecture would be the best solution to this problem, there are other answers. Basic texts in architectural history can help one understand at least the sequence of buildings surrounding a green.

Pierson, William H., Jr. *The Colonial and Neoclassical Styles*. American Buildings and Their Architects. Vol. 1. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Pierson, William H., Jr. *Technology and the Picturesque, The Corporate and the Early Gothic Styles*. American Buildings and Their Architects. Vol. 2. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Jordy, William H. *Progressive and Academic Ideals at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. American Buildings and Their Architects. Vol. 3. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Jordy, William H. *The Impact of European Modernism in the Mid-Twentieth Century*. American Buildings and Their Architects. Vol. 4. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Rifkind, Carole. *A Field Guide to American Architecture*. New York: Plume, 1980.

Poppeliers, S., Allen Chambers, Nancy B. Schwartz. *What Style Is It?* Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1977

Pierson and Jordy's American Buildings and Their Architects Series provides a good compromise between generalities and breadth. They use frequent references to specific buildings to explain their broad arguments about the development of architecture in this country. They are, of course, only one of the many general texts that one might read. The Rifkind and Poppeliers (et al.) books provide quick reference for question of period and style. While neither is more than a guide book, each is a good example of the genre.

*The Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals*. Located at the Avery Architectural Library at Columbia University. (Also available for the years 1977 to the present on-line.)

. The Avery Index covers periodical articles about planning and landscape architecture that might be beyond the scope of the other resources. It is worth checking to see what has been written about the architecture of one's town, especially as Connecticut was a favorite subject during the heyday of the Colonial Revival.

There are thousands of books on specific subjects which one could list here. I shall list just a few which are outstanding examples.

Garrison, J. Ritchie. *Landscape and Material Life in Franklin County, Massachusetts, 1770-1860*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991.

Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Stilgoe, John. *Outside Lies Magic: Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places*. New York: Walker and Company, 1998.

These books demonstrate just how much can be learned from looking at buildings and land use together. None of them concentrates on the history of greens, but each provides examples of the sort of information that can be garnered by a close examination of the landscape and the buildings in it. Garrison discusses the many forces that went in to changing the landscape of a Western Massachusetts county. Jackson provides an admirably comprehensive history of suburbanization, a force which has affected or is affecting greens throughout Connecticut. And Stilgoe provides an exhortation to get out into the world and look at one's surroundings. Nothing could be better advice for someone researching a town green.

*Religious Architecture*

Donnelly, Marian Card. *The New England Meeting Houses of the Seventeenth Century*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1968.

Kelly, J. Frederick. *Early Connecticut Meetinghouses*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1948.

Sweeney, Kevin. "Meetinghouses, Townhouses, and Churches: Changing Perceptions of Sacred and Secular Space in Southern New England, 1720-1850." *Winterthur Portfolio* V. 28, no. 1 (Spring, 1993): 59-94.

Williams, Peter W. *Houses of God: Region, Religion, and Architecture in the United States*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997.

Religion was central to the lives of most of Connecticut's early settlers. Because of this centrality the meetinghouse often received a place of prominence on the town green. Thus, when writing about greens one often writes about church architecture. Kelly is the oldest of the texts on meetinghouses. He does a masterful job of summing up the construction history of the buildings, often relying on primary documents, as well as providing well-rendered architectural drawings of the structures. Donnelly is still considered the final word on 17<sup>th</sup> century meetinghouse architecture. It is an important book for background, and to flesh out the

references to early churches, which are now found only in public documents and the pages of local histories. Sweeney links changes in the buildings around and on the green with changes in the social history of New England towns. It is worth reading as a model of material culture/vernacular architecture research, as well as for the many references to specific Connecticut towns, greens, and buildings. Williams provides a good starting point for understanding the relationship between houses of worship, their form, and the liturgy of the religion using them. It is organized on a regional basis, so that research can be concentrated on New England.

*Transportation*

One factor which had a great affect on Connecticut's greens is transportation. Some greens began as roads, others simply at crossroads, and many criss-crossed by roads. From these starting points greens have always been affected by changes in transportation. The coming of toll roads and mail routes, the arrival of the railroad (or the bypassing of a town such as Tolland), and the path of state highways has greatly affected the way that our greens appear today. In many towns, such as Brooklyn, transportation is a current topic of debate. There are, unfortunately, no comprehensive histories of transportation in Connecticut. Instead one must assemble a history from various publications and documents. The best guide to this process is in Collier (p. 265-275).

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