Landscape Architecture on the Prairie: The Work of H. W. S. Cleveland

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The history of European settlement in North America has as one of its great themes the desire of settlers to bring to the new land vestiges of what they considered to be civilization. This was a manifestation of an ongoing love-hate relationship with that natural landscape which they emigrated to exploit. On one hand, it was the undeveloped qualities that gave the land much of its value; while on the other hand, these resources were feared because they were so unknown and unmanaged. In Kansas the prairies were one such resource. The luxuriant prairie grasses were at once sources of wonder and of fear—wonder at the volume and variety of plant life and the rich soil which produced the prairie, but fear of the natural forces such as fire and wind which generated the land’s abundance.

To quell their fears of this new environment, settlers in all parts of the country quickly attempted to recreate elements from their past. This reduced the unfamiliar in the frontier landscape, made it appear more like home, and became civic emblems of progress. Perhaps one of the most important areas in which settlers attempted to bring their concept of civilization was to the land itself. In Kansas, of course, they could not and would not recreate the vast wooded landscapes from which many of them had come in the East, but they could and did create bits and pieces of it in selected important ceremonial landscapes such as their home yards, public parks, cemeteries, and institutional grounds. These sites and their designs were thus of both functional and psychological value in attempting to form a link for settlers between their former homes and the unique Kansas landscape on which they chose to make new homes.

Much of the work of creating these landscapes, the remnants and successors of which remain with us today, was done by nameless individuals. Some were untrained individuals attempting to create beauty in an alien land; others were trained designers—architects, gardeners, landscape architects, surveyors, and engineers. Their names have often been lost to us, not because their work was considered unimportant, but more likely, because it was considered commonplace and less lasting than the design of buildings. This, though, is often not the case. While landscapes, especially designed landscapes, change and evolve over time (this actually being an element of the design), their general form can remain remarkably persistent. The overall pattern of tree distribution may remain the same (even when species are changed), road arrangements and building sites continue (even when particular structures are replaced) in the same locations, and established topography, including drainage features such as ponds, are rarely altered. Thus, a close look at nineteenth-century landscapes can reveal much about their actual designs and enable us to understand how they have influenced the current appearance of a site.

The lasting character of early design work is forcefully demonstrated in the known projects of well documented designers. The most obvious, as well as one of the best examples, is the 1858 design for Central Park in New York City by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. Despite numerous controversial changes over the years, the original concept of the plan—the provision for a variety of visual experiences, especially naturalistic and pastoral scenery, persists. Its appeal remains, and it is so popular that much of the original design is being restored.

One need not look all the way to the East Coast to find examples of designed landscapes which retain their nineteenth-century spirit. Settlers attempting to bring civilization to the prairies also brought skilled designers to Kansas. The most famous of these in the nineteenth-century Midwest was Horace William Shaler Cleveland (1814-1900). H. W. S. Cleveland (who generally used only his initials) was a self-taught designer of the land and had chosen the profession of landscape architecture, even before it was officially given that name. Cleveland was born on December 16, 1814, in Massachusetts, to a socially prominent but not wealthy family descended from Moses Cleveland. His father, Richard Jeffrey Cleveland, was a Lancaster, Maine, merchant.
Figure 1. "Plan of Highland Cemetery, Junction City, Kansas." H. W. S. Cleveland, Landscape Gardener, 1870.
seaman who wrote an account of his travels, *Narrative of Voyages and Commercial Enterprises*, which was well known in its day. In 1804 Richard married Dorcas Cleveland Hiller, to whom he was distantly related. From then until 1828 the family resided in Massachusetts. In 1828 (or 1829) the family traveled to Havana, Cuba, where for five years Richard Cleveland served as vice-consul under then consul, William Shaler, a longtime friend and namesake of Horace. In 1833 (or 1835) the family returned to Massachusetts and settled in Boston. Horace apparently was not given to organized education and did not attend Harvard as had his older brothers Richard and Henry. Instead, he studied engineering for a time, probably as an apprentice. It was reportedly during this period that he first visited the Midwest. In 1842 Cleveland was married to Maryann Dwinel. During their long and affectionate marriage two sons were born, Henry Russell and Ralph Dwinel. Ralph later worked with his father although he never adopted landscape architecture as a profession.

Although Cleveland had begun his professional endeavors as a civil engineer, in 1855 he established a landscape gardening (as the profession was then known) practice in Boston with Robert Morris Copeland. This partnership continued until it was interrupted by the Civil War, but little is known of the firm’s work. Cleveland trained Union riflemen during the war, and when the war ended he apparently had difficulty reestablishing a practice. Between 1865 and 1869 he had many temporary assignments, including his first contact with Frederick Law Olmsted who probably helped him secure a position working on Prospect Park in Brooklyn, New York. The lack of consistent work encouraged him to move to the then booming Midwest. Beginning in 1869 he set up a practice in Chicago with two civil engineers. The first was Samuel Gedgeley, with whom he formed a very loose association, and the second was William W. French, who remained his partner for seven or eight years. It was while in partnership with Gedgeley that Cleveland completed the first of his three known projects in Kansas, Highland Cemetery in Junction City. While working with French he was commissioned to prepare his second known work in Kansas, a plan for the statehouse grounds in Topeka. His third Kansas project, at the National Military Home in Leavenworth, was begun later, in the mid-1880s.

Cleveland, of all the landscape architects from the East, was probably the most admirably suited to practice in the Midwest. A very thoughtful observer of nature, his primary objective was to adapt his design ideas to a particular site rather than to apply preconceived and often ill-fitting forms to every site encountered. In his well-known and recently reissued book, *Landscape Architecture As Applied to the Wants of the West*, he presented this viewpoint:

Every Western traveler is familiar with the monotonous character of the towns resulting from the endless repetition of the dreary uniformity of rectangles....In the arrangement of towns no advance has been made from the original rectangular fashion, which even when the site is level, is on many accounts objectionable while with every departure from an even surface, the advantages become apparent of adapting the arrangement of the streets to its inequalities. Every one who is familiar with the river towns of the West will recall innumerable instances of enormously expensive works in cutting down hillsides and building up embankments; of the almost total destruction of valuable building sites...while all the naturally beautiful or picturesque features of the place have been destroyed or rendered hideous in the effort to make them conform to a rectangular...
system, as if the human intellect were as powerless to adapt itself to changing circumstances as the instinct of insects, whose cells are constructed on an unvarying pattern.\footnote{7}

In addition to his philosophy of designing with the land, Cleveland was well suited to the cultural attitudes of Kansas, being a displaced New Englander like many of the early leaders who settled in Kansas. It is not surprising then that Cleveland’s first design project in Kansas occurred at Junction City, a town considered a frontier outpost of the New England cultural colony created in the Kaw Valley.\footnote{8} Here in 1870 he designed one of the state’s earliest “Rural”\footnote{9} or Romantic cemeteries. Located on high ground to the southwest of the city, appropriately it was named Highland Cemetery. The story of the design and establishment of the cemetery is one that tells in expressive physical form of the settlers’ desires to create civilized hometowns, of emerging communities’ civic pride in their public facilities, and of the design approach taken to create a lasting memorial to those who had passed on.

The original idea of creating a semi-public cemetery for Junction City appears to have come from John A. Anderson. Anderson was at that time the pastor of the

7. H. W. S. Cleveland, Landscape Architecture as Applied to The Wants of the West, ed. Roy Lubove (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986), 15-17. It appears that the idea of writing this book actually began on a trip to visit the Highland Cemetery site in 1870. Cleveland wrote to Olmsted that “My recent trip on the Kansas Pacific R. R. served to strengthen my conviction of the urgent importance of making a vigorous protest on the subject of the arrangement of towns... I want to write a whole book about it.” Cleveland to F. L. Olmsted, Sr., September 7, 1870, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers [hereafter cited as Olmsted Papers], container 12, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.


9. The term refers to a distinctive cemetery design which emphasized a parklike setting with open spaces between family plots. This was in contrast to the urban cemetery which had traditionally been a dense tombstone-dominated graveyard. They were termed “Rural” because they were originally located outside city limits.
First Presbyterian Church, a post which he had assumed in 1868. His reason for forming a cemetery association may never be fully known but one could advise speculate that he was influenced by several goals. Certainly he wished to have a suitable permanent burial place for deceased parishioners. At that time permanent burial was not always assured as can be seen from the treatment of bodies buried in the cemetery of Kansas City, Missouri. In addition, Anderson was surely the sort of man who believed that symbols of civilized society were an important factor in elevating the social and moral standards, as well as civic pride of the community. Perhaps he had a personal reason as well. His own aging parents had joined him in 1869 and he may have foreseen the need for an appropriate burial place for them. In fact, his father, William, became one of the earliest, some sources say the first, burials at Highland having been moved there on completion of the grounds. Further, Anderson, a well educated man, had likely seen or at least read of some of the noted Rural cemeteries in the East such as Mt. Auburn in Boston or Greenwood in New York City. These were so popular both as burial places and as rural park-like respites for urban dwellers that the Rural cemetery became the fashionable type of cemetery in late nineteenth-century America.

To achieve the goals which Anderson envisioned for Highland Cemetery, he sought advice from Frederick Law Olmsted, undoubtedly the best known landscape architect of his day. Anderson wrote to his father that “I have written to Fred [sic] Law Olmsted, formerly in Sanitary Com. [U.S. Sanitary Commission, the Civil War precursor to the American Red Cross] & the designer of Central-Park for advice as to a skillful gardener, who will furnish us a plan.” It was undoubtedly Olmsted who referred Anderson to Cleveland, just as he had referred others to his correspondent and colleague. In an August 1870 letter, Cleveland acknowledged Olmsted’s reference: “I am just starting for Junction City, Kansas, to see about their Cemetery—for which piece of work I believe I am indebted to you and for which I thank you.”

Cleveland’s services for preparation of a site plan were obviously arranged via letter, since the Junction City Weekly Union of July 9, 1870, announced, “Highland Cemetery Association have employed Mr. W. H. S. [sic] Cleveland, landscape gardener, of Chicago, to furnish a plan for them.” Cleveland, though, did not report actually visiting the city until late August. Olmsted’s recommendation of Cleveland must have carried a good deal of weight with the cemetery association for the local newspaper had a high opinion of him even before he set to work. The announcement of July 9, 1870, continued, “Mr. Cleveland stands high for taste in this line [landscape design], and we are assured that Highland, under his direction, will become the finest cemetery in the State.” This first glowing pronouncement is but a small sample of the verbal enthusiasm that accompanied the development of the cemetery. The event became a major civic rallying point, making front page news on several occasions.

As in most of the smaller projects completed by Cleveland, he did not personally choose the site to be developed as it was already owned by the association. He did approve of the choice, and in a letter to Olmsted he commented positively on both the persistence of the president of the association, John Anderson, and his choice of cemetery site.

I [Cleveland] was greatly amused and interested with the Rev. Mr. Anderson, who is a rich character and is doing good service esthetically, as well as theologically. He told me he had to fight half the town to prevent their laying the cemetery out in squares on level bottom land, but he has secured a beautiful site on a bluff overlooking

11. W. J. Ward, History of the Square between Oak and Locust Streets, and Missouri Avenue and Independence Ave., in Kansas City, Missouri (Kansas City, Mo.: Woody Printers, n.d.). Cemetery arrangement and burial were haphazard affairs in frontier towns. Often ownership of land was unclear, so when a financially more rewarding land use could be found, a burial ground was reclaimed by a private owner. Many early cemeteries were carelessly platted and not physically delineated so burial might occur outside the boundary. In addition, burial itself was careless, with graves not being dug full depth, grave fill not being compacted, and the burial sites being neither recorded nor marked. By the 1870s all of these circumstances combined to create somewhat of a scandal regarding Kansas City, Missouri’s, first cemetery. The most shocking aspect of the problem was the exposure of bodies that had been buried in the street right-of-way and of others uncovered as a result of erosion. The thought of surfacing bodies in the middle of the city would certainly give any citizen cause to rethink urban burial practices.
12. Daily Union, Junction City, June 7, 1883.
13. John A. Anderson to William Anderson [August 1870]. Anderson Family Papers, Ms. Box 445, microfilm roll no. 2, frames 212-213, Manuscripts Department, Kansas State Historical Society. The August 1870 date assigned to the letter is undoubtedly incorrect since Cleveland had been employed by that time. It more likely dates to spring of 1870.
15. Junction City Weekly Union, July 9, 1870.
17. Junction City Weekly Union, July 9, 1870.
the town. His influence on the people around him was very marked. I wish there were more like him. 14

Immediately after his August visit to Junction City work was begun on the plan, which consisted primarily of laying out roads and drainage ways, subdividing the land into burial plots, and developing a schematic planting plan which would be expanded later on the site. This plan (Figure 1) was completed by December 1870 when surveyor George Gatrell was hired to begin laying out lots in the first six sections. 19 By February of 1871 lots were ready for inspection by prospective purchasers, although not all of the roads, lots, and plantings were completed by this time. 20 Early lot sales were reportedly quite brisk. 21

The newspaper did its part to promote the cemetery by reporting frequently on its development and by publishing articles by both Anderson and Cleveland on cemetery design. In flowery prose the editor noted on March 4, 1871, that “the opening of such a beautiful cemetery as Highland is without doubt the greatest stride this region has ever made from barbarism to civilization.” 22 Articles by newspaper staff and by Anderson give us a further inkling of the civic importance of the project, while the articles by Cleveland provide a great deal of insight into the visual and functional qualities which his plan embodied.

Shortly after the initial sale of lots the Weekly Union devoted most of its front page to a printing of the “Constitution, By-Laws and Rules” of the cemetery association. These are not remarkable in themselves, being similar to those for other cemetery associations throughout the country. They, like others, provided

20. Ibid., February 25, 1871.
21. Ibid., March 11, 1871.
22. Ibid., March 4, 1871.

Figure 3. Present entry of Highland Cemetery on Ash Street looking toward the southwest. Gateway dates to ca. 1888 and is probably not of Cleveland’s design. His use of evergreen masses at the entry does remain.
guidelines relating to later development of the cemetery as a whole and for individual lots. For example, "All fences and enclosures around burial lots, wooden trellises and head boards of any description whatsoever are absolutely prohibited," and "If any monument... shall be determined by the Board of Directors to be offensive or improper... the said Directors or their agents shall have the right... to enter upon such lot and remove the said offensive or improper object or objects." The purpose of such regulations in Rural cemeteries was to provide a safe, healthful environment and to assure that its park-like character was preserved. As the Highland Cemetery Association expressed it, "The Board of Directors have no wish to interfere with the taste of individuals in regard to the style of their improvements; but in justice to the interests of the corporation, they reserve to themselves the right given them by law of preventing or removing any structure or object which they shall consider injurious to the general good appearance of the grounds, and particularly to adjoining lots."

In the following month Anderson made a lengthy report to the citizenry regarding the status of the cemetery in which he printed, in its entirety, a letter written to Cleveland in praise of the cemetery design. He also commented on the importance of cemeteries to small communities:

Cemeteries should be more common than parks, just in proportion that villages outnumber cities. Every town should have a garden for its dead, and especially should the new towns of the West take hold at once... With wise and persistent effort any town may establish a first class cemetery in a few years, and... it would not be long before the unsightly enclosures which are now so common, would be replaced by tastefully arranged cemeteries.

23. Ibid.
25. Ibid, April 8, 1871.

Figure 4. View of Highland Cemetery looking southwest from central portion of cemetery. Location shown in Figure 2 at position (A). The sequence of wooded and open space can be seen clearly.
Cleveland frequently wrote brief reports to accompany his design plans, but since none for Highland Cemetery have been found, we must rely on his contributions to the Weekly Union to better understand his preferred method of work and design intent. In an April 22 article he explained the value of creating a master plan.

Whatever may be the natural beauty of the tract selected, it is essential to the development of its features, and the ultimate convenience and economy of land, that an exact design for its arrangement should be prepared before any work is begun upon the ground.... With a properly prepared plan it is easy to transfer to the ground whatever portion of the work may be most desirable, and thus it may be carried on from year to year as means may serve, or occasion require, with the certainty of preserving the unity of design and working always to the same end.26

26. Ibid., April 22, 1871.

The extent to which this ideal was achieved at Highland Cemetery will be reviewed shortly.

Of the cemetery design itself, Cleveland wrote most expressively in a letter published by the Weekly Union in March 1871. In reviewing the general arrangement of circulation roads and walkways, he wrote that his inspiration “has been governed by the natural shape of the ground, to which they [roads] have been so adapted as to secure the easiest grades, and the most convenient access to the lots in each section.”27 Cleveland’s ability to work with existing topography in such a way that roads fit to it as though no other scheme was possible was his greatest skill and one of the identifying characteristics of all his work in the Midwest. While the closeness of this relationship is not evident in Cleveland’s plan, as there is no symbolic representation of the landform, such as contour lines, recent photographs of the site illustrate this facet of his work. Figure 2 shows

27. Ibid., March 4, 1871.

Figure 3. View of Highland Cemetery looking southeast toward bluff. This area is among those most like Cleveland’s original site plan, particularly in the road layout. Location shown in Figure 2 at position (B).
the current cemetery plan with an added topography from the U.S. Geological Survey. The similarity of road pattern to topography is perhaps most evident in the southeast quadrant of the cemetery where an exterior road runs along the edge of the bluff and this line is then replicated in roughly parallel interior roads. Cleveland also foresaw a potential need to expand the cemetery and designed its western portion so new roads and sections could be easily added.

The cemetery was to be not merely a collection of small separate burial plots surrounded by roads, but was conceived as a scenic landscape with some areas left as open space. "A good deal of vacant land is left for ornamental use in the front part of the grounds, and occasionally at prominent points elsewhere, and such spaces may sometimes appropriately be selected for the erection of public monuments." These open areas contained the majority of trees proposed, as their size allowed, for mass planting.

Cleveland's concepts for the execution of his planting design demonstrate the visually sensitive approach he took to the arrangement of plant material. Unlike most planting designs of his day, which emphasized the use of individual plants frequently of exotic form or color, Cleveland attempted to use plants in what would be considered a modern manner. He used masses of plants to emphasize a variety of spatial sequences as the visitor moved through the cemetery. Of this he wrote, "The plantations on the portions not occupied by lots, are arranged in masses of evergreen or deciduous trees, so disposed as to leave unobstructed the most desirable views, and at the same time to secure a pleasing effect of alternate wood and lawn." He also attempted to provide unique mood-creating experiences as one entered the site. He "endeavored to secure a picturesque effect by thick plantations of evergreens on each side [of the entrance], which will increase its apparent depth, and will at once arrest the attention of the visitor on approaching the entrance..." In planting the ravine I would have no attempt made to smooth and round off [Cleveland's emphasis] the sides. The object is to give it the character of a wild natural chasm..."

For planting on or near burial lots Cleveland recommended a different approach than that to be taken in the common areas: "Ornamental shrubs, vines and flowers may appropriately be planted on the lots in the open ground, but trees should rarely be admitted, and then only singly or in groups of three or four, and these in such position that they will not interfere with any view which it is desirable to preserve." In the plan itself he illustrated how these trees could be appropriately arranged, either lining the road to form a random allee or near the internal paths where they would provide a backdrop to monuments and a visual separation of family plots. Cleveland did not complete a detailed planting plan which specified the plant species to be used at each location. Rather his plan differentiated only between locations for deciduous and evergreen trees. In his "Explanations" for the plan a list of suitable trees, shrubs, and vines which lot owners could plant were given. This approach would seem odd to us today, but the great distance which Cleveland traveled to do his work, as well as the vagaries of securing a specific plant when desired in a developing frontier area, probably necessitated such technique. Also, as he pointed out, "For the masses which constitute the principal plantations, health and vigor are more important characteristics than individual beauty of form or foliage." Thus, the specific species used was far less important than the overall effect.

What of Highland Cemetery today? As a facility still serving the needs of Junction City, what elements of Cleveland's original design remain and how well is the character of a nineteenth-century Rural cemetery preserved? Remarkably, given the extent of time elapsed since its creation, the cemetery remains true to the most important and visible aspects of Cleveland's concept. This is clear from comparison of Cleveland's 1871 plan (Figure 1) and a contemporary map (Figure 2). Most of the roads remain as Cleveland aligned them. The eastern half of the site shows only minor alterations in road alignment, the most obvious being the loss of two bluff-edge drives surrounding open areas at the northeast and southeast corners of the site. The western half of the site has not fared as well. Road locations in the southwest have remained in roughly the same location, but have been straightened. The northwest quadrant (section 13) is completely different in plan and character than proposed. An open area of about two acres located along the west entry road has been converted to lots and the road pattern completely altered. This area appears to be more recently developed which may explain why it is so different from the rest of the site.

Planting designs are among the most ephemeral of creations. At Highland Cemetery almost all of the

28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
disasters that can befall a site have occurred since 1871. Certainly all of the purposeful and accidental changes to the plantings will never be known, but to realize how remarkable the current level of preservation actually is, some of the known alterations should be mentioned. First, it must be recalled that the cemetery was developed in phases with different association boards and sextons directing the work. John Anderson, the guiding spirit of the cemetery and the one most likely to have had the greatest allegiance to Cleveland’s master plan, became far less involved in cemetery affairs when he moved to Manhattan, Kansas, in 1873. Aside from the effects of oscillating aesthetic guidance, the first great recorded cataclysm to hit the cemetery occurred on Thanksgiving Day, 1883. While the sexton was burning a fire lane or guard around the perimeter of the site,35 the fire got out of his control. It burned “the entire occupied portion of the cemetery, totally ruining about all the trees and evergreens...”36 Even if some of the original plants remained, any effect of tree masses would have been completely eradicated. The following February a newspaper editorial urged a spring planting effort to restore lost trees and shrubs.37 When this actually was done is not known, but by 1889 it was reported “that some lots have become overgrown...”38

The same newspaper report also mentioned the establishment of a nursery on cemetery grounds. This was to have two purposes; first, to serve as a source of plants for the cemetery itself and second, to earn money for maintenance through sale to patrons.39 The idea of a nursery within the cemetery was one that Cleveland had suggested in 1871.

Every group [of trees]...planted will serve as a nursery to furnish trees for further planting; for in order to secure immediate effect, the trees should be planted a great deal nearer together than they ought finally to be left, and thus they will require thinning annually to prevent them from crowding and injuring each other. If the most conspicuous groups therefore are first planted, they will furnish stock enough for the more remote ones in subsequent years, as well as for supplying the wants of lot owners...” 40

The manner in which the nursery of 1889 was planted appears to have differed substantially from the random naturalistic pattern envisioned by Cleveland. A remnant of the nursery appears to survive in the southeast quadrant of the cemetery where the trees are all equidistant and align in obvious rows. The visual effect of this creates an extremely homogeneous tree canopy with none of the wood and lawn variations proposed by Cleveland.

The fire and commercial nursery venture were not the only events to alter the planting plan of Highland Cemetery. Severe ice storms and disease, particularly Dutch elm disease, have removed many of the older more vulnerable trees.41 To these add all of the typical impacts to which plants are subject such as drought, bark injury and general old age, and the current level of preservation becomes amazing. (See Figures 3, 4, and 5.)

Cleveland’s employment in Junction City may have led directly to his next major project in Kansas—the design of the statehouse grounds. Since no direct correspondence with state officials has been found, the manner in which this commission was acquired is uncertain. At any rate, on April 22, 1871, the Junction City Weekly Union announced with obvious pride that “H. W. S. Cleveland, architect of Highland Cemetery, is in Topeka, preparing plans for the ornamentation of the capitol grounds.”42 These plans most likely included a grading plan, a plan for road layout, and a planting plan. Of these, only Cleveland’s planting plan titled “Working Plan for Arranging the State House Grounds, Topeka, Kansas”43 is known to survive today; fortunately, the horizontal alignment of roads and paths can also be determined from this plan (Figure 6). The extent to which Cleveland’s design for “Capitol Square” was ever developed is unclear. Some early planting may have followed his suggested patterns, but the grounds as they now exist contain only remnants of his concepts. A brief review of the history of the construction of the capitol building may help explain why this occurred.

34. Under the new sexton, Carlos Dillard, efforts have been renewed to rehabilitate the cemetery grounds. The author noted a significant improvement in tree care and underbrush removal between a May 1984 visit and one in June 1986.

35. It must be remembered that in the early 1870s much Kansas land remained in prairie grasses and fire was a constant threat. Many cemeteries were completely enclosed with stone walls to protect from these fires. The stone wall initially planned for Highland was obviously never completed and today only lines the front property line along Ash Street.

36. Junction City Union (weekly), December 1, 1883.
37. Ibid., February 9, 1884.
38. Junction City Tribune, May 2, 1889.
39. Ibid.
40. Junction City Weekly Union, March 4, 1871. Such overplanting was a common practice in the nineteenth century when labor costs were less than today’s and seedlings were frequently collected from surrounding woods.
42. Junction City Weekly Union, April 22, 1871
43. Original in the possession of the Kansas State Historical Society.
Figure 6. "Working Plan for Arranging the State House Grounds, Topeka, Kansas, June, 1871."
Cleveland and French, Chicago.
The employment of Cleveland in 1871 to complete a site development plan for the statehouse grounds appears, with twentieth-century hindsight, to have been an act of foolhardy optimism regarding the potential to finish the capitol within the near future. Construction of the building’s east wing had begun in October 1866, but within four months “it was discovered that the foundation was crumbling and... all the walls above the ground more or less cracked and worthless.” After this inauspicious start a new contractor was selected and work continued with occupancy of the east wing occurring officially on December 25, 1869, despite an awkward entry into the building. Apparently, the legislators, with a place to meet, did not feel compelled to complete any further structures for some time. Major expenditures up to 1879 were for finishing touches to the east wing and the grounds. From 1879 to 1881 the west wing was built. From 1884 to 1889 work proceeded on the central portion and dome, but again structural failure caused a delay, postponing completion until the early 1900s. The final, northern portion of the central structure was not usable until 1906. Thus, the capitol itself was not finalized until more than thirty years after the state began to develop the grounds. While it is possible that some portions of Cleveland’s plan could have been implemented in the 1870s and 1880s during capitol construction, photographic evidence suggests that few of the specific details were developed. Cleveland’s plan probably served more as a general guide to later development.

While the development of the grounds relates closely to the construction of the statehouse, there are several interesting historic episodes that relate to it alone and which can indicate when and what portions of Cleveland’s plan were carried out. Practical concern with the site of the capitol had obviously begun late in 1870. A January 8, 1871, advertisement announced, “Wanted. A good, practical gardener. A German, with family, preferred. For particulars, enquire at Capital [sic] House.” This job probably involved site preparation for the work that was anticipated after the site plan had been prepared. We know from Cleveland’s drawing that the grading of the north side of the site was completed in 1871. F. W. Giles reported that this initial grading along with tree planting cost $8,000, but much of the plant material died immediately, possibly from lack of water or soil compaction from construction. However, from Giles’ further comments it is unclear whether these early plantings had followed Cleveland’s plan, since Giles reported that the trees planted included elms along Eighth and Jackson, whereas Cleveland’s plan showed elms only along Tenth.

The next effort to plant the grounds came in 1875 when Topeka mayor T. J. Anderson inaugurated an Arbor Day celebration on April 22. Eight hundred to one thousand trees, dug from neighboring woods, were transplanted that day. Giles described the ceremonial and horticultural events of the day: “citizens would march in procession to the capitol grounds, each with a tree or more upon his shoulder, and there plant, and then care for the trees of their planting...” In spite of this civic effort, the newly planted trees did not last any longer than earlier plantings; this is obvious from an 1879 photograph that shows the statehouse site punctuated only by a wooden fence.

In 1883 a major addition to the grounds was completed. This was the Topeka Library which stood on Eighth Avenue near Jackson until 1961. It appears from an “Atchison Daily Champion” article that such freestanding structures had been part of the grounds for some time. This was merely the largest and most persistent. A photograph dated to 1886 shows extensive improvements to the grounds, including a low wooden fence and heavy tree plantings near the street. The size of the trees indicates that these were not recently planted. Portions of the site nearer the building were still in use as work space and a stone storage yard for the construction of the capitol. An 1880 aerial perspective by Augustus Koch shows impressively developed grounds with many trees and baroque curvilinear paths. Unfortunately, it also shows a statehouse complete with dome, a feat not accomplished until 1906. The grounds shown in the view are surely as much a work of fiction as the capitol.

45. Ibid., 255. Richmond reports the following statement from the Kansas State Record, Topeka, of December 22, 1869. “In the temporary wooden steps which have been put up at the east front, the visitor perceives a remarkable resemblance to the ‘shoot up which pigs march to certain death in a slaughterhouse.”
46. Ibid., 256-64.
47. Kansas Daily Commonwealth, Topeka, January 8, 1871.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Photograph, “View of State House, 1879,” FK 2.1 c.1879, No. 1, Photograph Division, Manuscripts Department, Kansas State Historical Society.
52. Atchison Daily Champion, January 25, 1881. See also Richmond, “Kansas Builds a Capitol.” 258.
53. Photograph, “View of the East and West Wings of the Capitol Building, 1886,” FK 2.1 c.1886, No. 1, Photograph Division, Manuscripts Department, Kansas State Historical Society.
Figure 7. "Proposed Plan of Improvement of the State House Grounds at Topeka, Kansas," Tweeddale and Slayton, Civil Engineers, August 10, 1895.
as the dome since no photograph shows any similar plan. In 1890 a new landscape architect was consulted, but his proposals seemed to have differed significantly from those of Cleveland. He said that "no tree should be nearer than 200 feet from the building." This landscape architect "found himself in trouble when he recommended the old cottonwood [since known as the Plains Cottonwood] at the southeast should be cut..." This plan also appears to have never been fully developed.

Although Cleveland's plan was never fully implemented, it remains an informative example of his work in a setting more formal than that of a Rural cemetery. The "Working Plan for Arranging the State House Grounds, Topeka, Kansas" was completed in 1871 under the firm name of Cleveland and French, but Cleveland was clearly responsible for the design development. On examination, the plan shows that his concept envisioned the creation of two visually distinct areas on the grounds. The one on the north side emphasized a heavily wooded setting through which vehicles approached the capitol directly, while pedestrians used curvilinear walks. The south grounds were more open with a large unbroken lawn and indirect access to the building for both pedestrians and vehicles. Details of plantings and circulation systems were developed to reinforce these differences.

There are four reasonable explanations for the differences in treatment of the north and south grounds.

54. Augustus Koch, "Birds Eye View of Topeka, Kansas," map (Kansas City, Mo.: Ramsey, Millett and Hudson, Lithographers, 1880), Map Division, Manuscripts Department, Kansas State Historical Society.
56. Several pieces of evidence justify this conclusion. First, Cleveland constituted the landscape architectural portion of the firm, French the engineering side. Secondly, no contemporaneous source mentions French's involvement in the project. Judging from the lifelong friendship which the two maintained, it is probable that the working relationship was one of mutual exchange of ideas, so that French may have critiqued the plan, but Cleveland was surely the principal designer.
First, there is a difference in topography with the north side, especially the northwest side, having a greater change in elevation than the south side. Secondly, there is a difference in relationship to the city of Topeka. In the 1870s major development was to the north of the capitol, particularly to the northeast where the main commercial district was located. While there was development south of the grounds, it was scattered and largely residential. Because of these existing patterns it may have been perceived that more direct access was required from the north, whereas the lesser traffic from the south could take a slightly less direct but more picturesque route. Thirdly, the proposed uses for the north and south porticos may have differed. It may have been intended that the south portico, with less difference in height between the ground and the building’s main floor, would be more appropriate as a speaking-making podium. More open ground would then be needed to accommodate crowds of listeners.

Last of all, there was a strong tradition in mid-nineteenth century design for creating areas with contrasting forms, usually the contrast between formal and geometric and informal and curvilinear. The north side with its straight road, lined with tree rows may represent that formal aspect while the less regular south side may represent the informal. Unfortunately, no definitive statement can be made as to which, if any, of these reasons influenced Cleveland since no written report of the design has yet been located.

Cleveland’s design for the north and south sides of the statehouse grounds is particularly interesting because although different design techniques were used, each side accomplishes the same goal. This is the leading of the eye to the building itself, especially to the impressive and well sited north and south porticos and from there on up to the dome. On the north this was to be accomplished through the use of a straight line drive which is an extension of Van Buren Street. The drive, lined with a double row of European lindens, would have created an impressive sight line. On the south side emphasis was to be more subtle. The arrangement of

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trees along roads and paths would create a loosely triangular form with its pinnacle at the portico. No plants would block direct views to the stairs, but rather would be positioned on either side to enframe it and the vertical walls to the ground. Through these methods, the stairs and portico would become the focal point of the southern facade.

As is the case today, the east and west grounds of the capitol were less important in Cleveland's design than those of the north and south. The site area between the building and streets is roughly a third of that on the larger sides and the space is occupied to a great extent by roads and paths. In the Cleveland plan these "side yards" are treated simply and symmetrically. Their main purpose was circulation from Harrison and Jackson streets and this would be accomplished by two traffic lanes, separated by a median that met at the circular drive surrounding the building. Pedestrian paths also would meet the drive at this point. Trees lining the drives and paths would create a mass planting which merged with the adjacent double row of street trees. The effect of this massing of trees would be to minimize any visual division that the density of paved areas might create.

The overall design effects suggested by the circulation system of the "Working Plan" are reinforced through the selection of plant material. The plan shows both trees and shrubs, with only the trees being identified by specific species location. In an index, twelve trees were listed by common, not botanic, name. These are elm, white beech, purple beech, Norway maple, sugar maple, white ash, tulip tree, cucumber magnolia, linden, weeping birch, mountain ash, and paulownia. (See Figure 10 for probable botanic names for each of these.) In addition, within the drawing itself the following species, not listed in the index, were named: hemlock, Scotch pine, European linden, Norway spruce, European larch, Austrian pine, and horsechestnut. The difference in labeling technique appears to relate primarily to the way in which the trees were to be planted, with those in distinctive masses being labeled on the plan while those to be scattered or have species intermixed were identified in the index and labeled by number in the plan.

Cleveland's tree planting design has several interesting aspects. First, the entire perimeter of the site was to be lined with double, staggered rows of deciduous trees, thereby creating an implied boundary between the street and the statehouse site. The deciduous, broadleaf character of the trees and their repeated use would assure a unity to this boundary, but within that unified perimeter, variety could be achieved through the use of a different tree species on each street. Along Tenth Avenue elms were to be planted, along Harrison, white ash, on Eighth, Norway maple, and bordering Jackson, horsechestnut. Conveniently, roads and paths entering the streets at the four corners of the block created a natural divide between species. The concept behind this arrangement appears to have no relationship to any existing pattern on the site or on opposite street sides. Also, no consistent design explanation based on texture, color, scale, or habit seems to produce a logical pattern to explain species location. Functionally, the selection of Norway maple on the north is the only obvious species choice since this tree is quite hardy and may have been able to better resist cold winter winds. It may well be that this tree was a favorite of an influential member of government. One interesting result of this planting proposal would have been that the horticulturally knowledgeable viewer could have easily differentiated between the east and west sides of the building and site, which in other details look so similar.

A second factor of importance in the planting design is the contrast between extensive use of needleleaf evergreens on the north and their exclusion from the south side. Climatic factors and differences in the proposed image of each facade probably explain this difference in treatment. On the north, with hemlock the dominant species (see Figure 10 for distribution of species), evergreens not only would create a woodland character and shield pedestrians from winter winds, but also would help to screen views at eye level so that the full magnitude of the capitol would not be visible until the portico stairs were reached. No needleleaf evergreens were proposed for the south side planting, but there the stately purple beech was proposed to create an imposing visual mass. With its reddish purple leaf color, upright habit, thick trunk and ultimate grand size, the purple beech would contrast in both scale and color to other massed deciduous trees, had it been viable.

Thirdly, the plan calls for a degree of visual unity to be created throughout the site by a consistency in the number of trees used in each quadrant (see Figure 10).

58. Few European purple beech (Fagus sylvatica atropurpurea) exist in Kansas. Sources at both the Kansas Arboretum Association and the Forestry Department, Kansas State University, considered the beech to be short-lived in the state because of the hot summers with desiccating winds. Other plant selections, white beech (Fagus grandifolia—southern type) and cucumber magnolia, possibly Magnolia cordata, also do not appear viable in Kansas. It must be remembered that extensive settlement had only occurred within the previous twenty years, far too short a time to build a working knowledge of local microclimatic conditions influencing ornamental plants.
The southwest and southeast portions differed in number by only one tree, while the northeast differed from the northwest by only three. While such a pattern would not assure a balanced unity when viewing each facade, it would simplify any attempt to produce an asymmetrically balanced planting scheme.

A fourth aspect of Cleveland's planting plan is the use of several species of trees as specimens. The massive tulip tree was to be used throughout the site and usually at a distance from the statehouse. The visual effect of these locations would have been to reduce the apparent size of the statehouse when viewed from the streets and make its details appear more refined in contrast to the rough texture of the trees. When the visitor moved toward the building and would no longer have the trees in view as scale indicators, the size and grandeur of the structure would be increased. The weeping birch, cucumber magnolia, and mountain ash were also to be used as specimen plants. These would be located along walkways for maximum visual effect at times of seasonal interest.

A final element in the plan is the proposed arrangement of single tree species in groups of two. Twenty-five percent of the one hundred eighty trees on the site would be in pairs that were physically or visually closely linked. This type of grouping is unusual by today's standards since only groups of three or more are considered to create a strong visual weight. Cleveland's design purpose in grouping trees in this way is unclear since he is not known to have written about it. In a few

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**Figure 10**

Tabulation of Tree Distribution from "Working Plan for the Arrangement of the State House Grounds."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Name</th>
<th>Probable* Botanic Name</th>
<th>SW</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>NW</th>
<th>NE</th>
<th>STREET</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELM</td>
<td>ULMUS AMERICANA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE BEECH</td>
<td>FAGUS GRANDIFOLIA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPLE BEECH</td>
<td>FAGUS SYLVATICA ATROPUNICEA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORWAY MAPLE</td>
<td>ACER PLATANOIDES</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUGAR MAPLE</td>
<td>ACER SACCHARUM</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE ASH</td>
<td>FRAXINUS AMERICANA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>39/13**</td>
<td>53/66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TULIP TREE</td>
<td>LIRIODENDRON TULIPIFERA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUCUMBER MAGNOLIA</td>
<td>MAGNOLIA ACUMINATA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINDEN</td>
<td>Tilia SPECIES</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEPING BIRCH</td>
<td>BETULA PENDULA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOUNTAIN ASH</td>
<td>SORBUS AUCUPARIA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAULOWNIA</td>
<td>PAULOWNIA TOMENTOSA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HORSECHESTNUT</td>
<td>AESCULUS HIPPOCASTANUM</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40/7**</td>
<td>40/47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEMLOCK</td>
<td>TSEGA CANADENSIS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUROPEAN LARCH</td>
<td>LARIX DECIDUA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOTCH PINE</td>
<td>PINUS Sylvestris</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORWAY SPRUCE</td>
<td>PICEA ARIES</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRIAN PINE</td>
<td>PINUS NIGRA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT IDENTIFIED</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number of similar trees in drive extension unlabeled but assumed to be same as adjoining street trees.

*Botanical names given for species listed by common name on plan are based on usage as given in two sources: For Every House a Garden, Rudy and Joy Favretti (CHESTER, CONN.: THE PEquot PRESS, 1977) and Standardized Plant Names, 2nd Ed. (HARLAN P. HELSEY and WILLIAM A. DAYTON, Eds. (HARRISBURG, PA.: J. HORACE McFARLAND COMPANY, 1942). Since Cleveland listed only common names, which can vary regionally, the botanic designation is the evaluation of the author and thus qualified as "probable."
instances the trees were to be on opposite sides of a pathway; it is possible that they were intended to create a living archway.

Roads, paths, lawn, and trees are the principal design features of Cleveland’s proposal, but four other elements are also important. These are the perimeter site fence with gateways, a retaining wall, two focal points, and shrub plantings. The plan shows a fence line around the ground’s exterior, set about five to ten feet from the inner row of street trees. At the Tenth Avenue entries, gate pillars were to connect to the fence line. Four pillars were to be located at the outside of the paths and at the edge of drive and path. On the plan a dashed line between the two flanking the driveway suggests an overhead linkage. At all other entries the fence line merely ended at the path with no gate indicated. The retaining wall was to be an approximately half-circle form, creating a terrace at the building level. It is shown with buttresses for support and a small flight of stairs in the center. The primary function of the wall was to take up the change in grade required to bring pedestrians up to the level of the main building stair. Flanking the stairs to the terrace, sites for focal points were selected. Two sets of concentric circles indicated the location and base form of the feature to be selected at a later day. As labeled on the plan, Cleveland had suggested that either a fountain or sculpture would be appropriate. These elements would have enframed the north stairway for all visitors entering from Eighth Avenue.

Shrubs are depicted in the plan, but neither named nor referenced to any key. The graphic symbol used to indicate shrubs is a miniature of that used for deciduous trees, so it may be inferred that all the shrubs to be used were deciduous. This was a common feature of mid-nineteenth-century planting. Popular shrub plants of the period and climatic region were common lilac (Syringa vulgaris), weigela (Weigela florida), spireas (various species), snowball viburnum (Viburnum macrocephalum), mockorange (Philadelphus coronarius), and deutzia (Deutzia scabra). Cleveland had discussed or used all of these in other planting plans, so he may have suggested them for the statehouse grounds. The vast majority of shrubs shown on the plan are located near the building itself, particularly inside the encircling drive. On the plan all are shown as planted in masses, lining paths or drives. Groupings on the north and south sides would enframe the entry stairs. The only other shrubs shown on the plan are small, somewhat linear groups, lining the drive entries from Tenth Avenue. In particular, at Tenth and Harrison a hedge-like arrangement is shown separating a pedestrian path from the drive. The limited distribution of shrubs suggests that they were a minor feature of Cleveland’s planting concept and were to accent certain

Figure 11. View of Lake Jeannette at Western Branch, National Military Home, probably ca. 1900, showing Moorish gazebo, lakeside planting, and amenities. Lake Jeannette began its existence as a clay quarry for bricks used to construct the old hospital. The gazebo probably was not built during Cleveland’s association with the Home.
points such as entries, as well as provide interesting eye-level detail in fruit and flower along the principal paths. Since most were to be located immediately adjacent to the building still under construction in 1871, they may have been merely suggestions to be developed at a later date. The planting of these shrubs would have been impractical prior to completion of construction and therefore it would have been equally impractical to suggest particular species which may not have been available in Kansas when the building was completed. Evidence from other Cleveland plans, which do not name or sometimes even show shrubs, suggest that he did these smaller scale plantings on the site by arranging available plants.

Hopefully, the mental picture of the Cleveland and French plan for Capitol Square that has been created from the above description has not been proposed solely as an exercise in fantasy. A clear understanding of those design concepts can give some indication as to the similarities and contrasts between the present design of the grounds and the one proposed in 1871. As has been seen from the earlier review of the history of the grounds, if Cleveland’s plan was initially followed, it did not last beyond 1879. The ongoing construction of the statehouse made it very unlikely that the plan really could have been implemented and maintained.

The plan which finally appears to have been adopted was that by Tweeddale and Slayton, Engineers, dated to 1895 (see Figure 7). William Tweeddale had been associated with the statehouse project for some time, having served as a grounds superintendent perhaps as early as the 1870s. In 1879 he became the construction contractor for the west wing. The Tweeddale plan shows a Beaux Arts style site plan dominated by curvilinear paths and drives. The arrangement of drives is very symmetrical in plan with the north side repeating the south. Planting was in irregular masses except for

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50. Giles, Thirty Years in Topeka, 115.
those trees lining the straight entry road from Tenth Avenue. Victorian style carpet beds were proposed for areas nearer the building. Two rather unique features of the plan were the use of underpasses below the north and south stairways and a picturesque pond at the northeast corner. Subsequent twentieth-century photographs show that the Tweeddale underpass and road concept was developed but that paths became much more symmetrical and direct. The tree planting was much more evenly distributed over the site than proposed and the pond was never created. More recent changes to the site include the closing of the south drive and its transformation to a pedestrian mall connecting to the Judicial Center, continued planting restorations and additions, and the removal of structures such as the library.

What does the present plan of the statehouse grounds owe to Cleveland’s 1871 plan? Four features stand out. First, there is a strong definition of the site by street trees. Secondly, the recognition of the site influences make the north side a different design entity than the south. This is largely expressed today in the planting design. Thirdly, there is a recognition of the strong service functions required of the east and west sides. And finally, the use of direct pedestrian paths from all four corners invites pedestrians into the grounds. These influences are obviously few in comparison to all of the visual and function ideas of Cleveland’s plan, but most landscapes evolve over time, while truly suitable ideas remain to give structure and permanence to any design.

From 1871 to 1884 no major site design projects by Cleveland are known to have been completed in Kansas. He undoubtedly was involved in smaller projects, particularly residences, but because of his apparent reticence in discussing details of his work, nothing is known of these. By 1884 or 1885 he had begun his final large project in the state—the Western Branch of the National Military Home south of Leavenworth. We know far less of Cleveland’s work on this project than any other. Thus, many aspects of his site plan and design must be inferred from other projects.

By whatever means he came to work at Leavenworth, Cleveland was an excellent choice for a designer to deal with this beautiful but challenging site. (Figure 12 illustrates the topographic setting of the home.) It is on a high point between a small valley on the west, through which a Santa Fe Railway line runs, and the Missouri River valley to the east. Each side of the site differs in form largely because of drainage patterns. The western side slopes gently and evenly, while the eastern side is cut by deep ravines and is generally steeper. Views on either side differ as well. On the west, a panorama of the opposite valley is possible because the distance is about a half mile. On the east the distance to the river is almost a mile, and the dense tree growth along waterways screens much of the view except on the Missouri side of the river. The site was unusual in that there was no large roughly rectilinear space for construction to occur, but rather a long ridge-like area between two high points.

A designer less sensitive than Cleveland to the opportunities afforded by topography might have stepped the buildings up the more gentle eastern slope, but he chose a bold plan. All of the major buildings, principally dormitories (military hospitals were frequently permanent homes for disabled veterans) were arranged in a roughly crescent-shaped line along the ridge. They were sited not with long sides running parallel with the ridge, but rather perpendicular to it. This arrangement allowed patients using the long porches of the dormitories to view both the river and the valley. It also created courtyard-like spaces between dorm buildings; these spaces were protected by the buildings themselves from cold north winds. Road access to the home was from the east, so one enters Highway 73, the direct link between Leavenworth and Kansas City. Along the valley floor the entry drive follows a straight line until the slope is met and there it divides into two. Each of these drives is set at a diagonal to the hill slope so that the route is easier for a vehicle to climb being less steep than a direct ascent. These paths also allow an undivided expanse of lawn and trees to be the foreground for the complex itself. When the top of the hill is reached, the

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60. He was very busy elsewhere. During the period Cleveland completed some of his most important projects, as well as producing an impressive collection of articles on landscape architecture. In partnership with William M. French, Cleveland developed site plans for several important subdivisions: Highland Park, Illinois; Washburn Park, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Robbins Park, Hinsdale, Illinois; and Brookside, Indianapolis, Indiana. All were developed at least in part, according to plans. Later, working alone, Cleveland developed plans for Elmo Park and St. Anthony’s Park in Minnesota; these plans were developed but never implemented. Site designs completed during this time include Oaklawn Cemetery, Dwight, Illinois; Roger Williams Park, Providence, Rhode Island; and Natural Bridge resort in Virginia. In 1873 he completed Landscape Architecture as Applied to the Wants of the West, his most influential book. Other publications included “The Aesthetic Development of the United Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis” and “A Few Words on the Arrangement of Rural Cemeteries.”

61. It is not clear if this was the original road pattern. Illustrations from the late 1880s show this area bisected by a large curving road. Its date is uncertain, but is associated with ornamental fountains from the post-Cleveland period. In form it is very unlike his other work and appears to be a Beaux Arts inspired addition, since removed.
drives curve in sharp loops and move inward along the eastern edge of the ridge in front of the buildings. On the hill, other roads diverge to lead to service areas and the western part of the site, including the National Cemetery. Not all of these date to the 1880s. The drive in front of the dormitories, known as Franklin Avenue, was to be the major circulation path, both pedestrian and vehicular. Both sides of the street were lined with walks and benches. Originally buildings were only located to the east of the road, but major structures soon were added along the west, thus interrupting part of the view to the valley.

This description is based on the current site plan and photographs from the late 1880s. There is a dearth of direct information about the original design. Cleveland mentioned the project only twice and both were cursory statements with no indication of his level of involvement. In June 1888 he wrote to long-time friend and the first president of the University of Minnesota, William Folwell, asking him to accompany him on a visit to the soldiers’ home.62 In an 1891 edition of Modern Cemetery an advertisement for Cleveland and Son lists the home as one of his projects.63 It may seem strange that Cleveland rarely mentioned such a significant project, but that was typical of him. In 1871 he and French had completed a three hundred-acre town plan in Illinois, but it was alluded to only twice, briefly in another letter to Folwell and listed in an advertisement.

Analysis of the design of the Military Home can be made in spite of the lack of documentation by comparison of this to Cleveland’s other projects. The site plan of the home bears striking similarities to that of another institutional site—the Minnesota State Training School in Red Wing, Minnesota—which Cleveland had begun in the 1880s. Entry there is via a roadway which crosses the hill at an angle to the slope. The road angle focuses the eye on the central administration structure. Other academic and administrative buildings are arranged roughly in a line parallel to the Mississippi River. All structures face out toward the river and none are on the river side of the road so that no views are obscured. Dormitories, some classrooms, and shops are located in another line parallel to the first and are slightly uphill from it. These positions continue to allow views of the river valley. The only areas closed off from the river are the field and the buildings directly behind the administration building.

From this brief description of the site the similarities to the Military Home at Leavenworth are clear. They have similar methods of approach, the buildings have

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63. Modern Cemetery, September 1891, 92.

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Figure 13. View of Franklin Street. Veterans Administration Center looking south, 1986. To the left (east) are domiciliaries and to the right the sloping front lawn of the Center.
linear arrangement patterns on bluffs, and emphasis is on retaining views from all structures to nearby valleys. These similarities, as well as some differences, are a direct response to the character of the site, especially topography. This point is reinforced by the observation that not all institution site plans with which Cleveland was associated have such linear forms. Shattuck School, Faribault, Minnesota, and Mt. Pleasant Treatment Center, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, both have more traditional building arrangements which produce a semi-enclosed courtyard. Each is on a site that has large rectangular flat areas rather than hillsides or ridgelines. Cleveland thus adapted the site plan to the natural landform.

Many site features present at the National Military Home postdate Cleveland's involvement with the project. Since his only references to it date to after work had begun, we may never know exactly what his work was. A review of the development of the home, however, may exclude some portions from consideration. The Leavenworth site was chosen for the home in 1884 after a determined public relations campaign by the city. The following year the first residents were admitted, but completion of all major buildings particularly the domiciliaries (as the dormitories were called) was not until about 1886.48 By that time the dominant form of the site had been established. Subsequent buildings were added to the original site and many decorative features were added. The first of these appears to have been a Moorish style bandstand in Lake Jeannette which dates to around 1890.49 In 1892 the Anheuser-Busch Company donated a fountain in the form of a cherub which was elevated on a thick pedestal of rustic rockwork.50 The most impressive structure on the site, aside from the original hospital, was constructed in 1893. This was a Romanesque-Gothic style chapel designed by Kansas City architect Louis Curtis.51 That was the first structure to be located west of Franklin Street. Additional bandstands were located on the grounds during the 1890s, including the impressively ornate one constructed across Franklin Street from the dining hall. Small changes occurred over the years until 1930 when the most significant change was made—the addition of the new Veterans Administration Hospital to the north. This addition changed little of the older part of the site, but new buildings have been added, most recently the new theater and library.

It is unlikely that Cleveland would have been at work at the home after 1891. His general health was declining at this time (he was seventy-seven) and work from that period was usually completed by his son Ralph. Thus, additions after that date probably do not reflect his design concepts. Physical evidence at the home reinforces this. First, the sitting of the chapel west of Franklin Street interrupts downhill views from two dormitories and is contradictory to the original site concept. Secondly, Cleveland abhorred what he considered the excessively ornate design features of the late Victorian period, such as carpet bedding. The fountain sculpture, no matter how interesting and unique, would have been offensive to him and its location a detraction from the beauty of the grassed hillside. This leaves primarily the original ridgeline arrangement of buildings, the circulation system, and some planting as being potentially his design. That these, in fact, are his work can be strongly inferred from those features which reflect his unique approach to regional design through adaptation to topography and his appreciation of natural and naturalistic scenery.

Cleveland's influence on landscape design in nineteenth-century Kansas is surely far greater than these three projects alone can indicate. Lack of documentation makes it impossible to speculate what other work he carried out, but by his own statement he completed some residential work in the state. The author has investigated several cemeteries and residential subdivisions within Kansas which could possibly be his work, but at this time neither visual nor written records suggest a positive attribution to Cleveland. In spite of the limited number of projects that clearly are Cleveland's, the available works well illustrate the most significant contributions which he made to landscape design in the Midwest. These are the development of a concept of regional site-specific design development based on adaptation to topography, the emphasis on organized site planning prior to the development of the site, and the use of plans, especially trees, in masses to create visual contrasts and spatial sequences. These concepts and the designs through which they were expressed surely became standards against which later landscape designs were measured. Today they continue to demonstrate the lasting value of site design in creating both visual and functional outdoor spaces.

48. American Association of University Women (AAUW), Leavenworth Branch, "Other Days...Other Ways: One Hundred Years of Freedom and Progress in Leavenworth, Kansas 1861-1961" (no imprint), 51.

49. Margaret Meredith, "Notes made in Fall of 1971 from Buildings at Western Branch, NHDVS, by Captain Charles M. Pearse, Quartermaster," (duplicated sheet), Voluntary Services, Veterans Administration Center, Wadsworth, Kansas.


51. Ibid.; AAUW, "Other Days... Other Ways," 51.