

“Frederick Law Olmsted: Bringing Nature to the City”

April 26, 2022 marks the 200 anniversary of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted, the master designer of public parks and a founder of the field landscape architecture. Join historian and filmmaker Laurence Cotton (originator of and consulting producer to the PBS special “Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing America” as he does a deep dive into the remarkable life and career of the Renaissance-man Olmsted – writer, philosopher, social reformer, advocate for the preservation of natural scenery, and creator of some of the most beautiful public and private parks and gardens in all of North America. Laurence will also give a visual tour of representative masterful landscapes designed by Olmsted, Senior, as well as his two sons and the Olmsted Bros. landscape architecture firm, as the footprint of their works literally stretch across the entire continent of N. America. Laurence will offer an additional tour of select Olmsted landscapes, from New Jersey to Washington, D.C.

Laurence Cotton, currently based in Portland, Oregon, a city that benefits from an Olmsted-master planned park system, originally hails from Boston, renowned for its Olmsted landscapes and the home base for generations of landscape design practitioners working for the Olmsted Bros. firm. A practicing public historian, and writer/producer of historical films for PBS, Mr. Cotton was trained as a cultural anthropologist and brings that lens to bear on much of his work. He has worked with the tribal populations throughout the Columbia River watershed and has also worked on open space acquisition and the designs of parks and trails in Pacific Northwest. He also brings to his work training as an interpretive naturalist and is a birder and a photographer.