

CHARLES L. HUTCHINSON AND HIS DESIGN PROFESSIONALS

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FOREWORD

Before I start to read this paper, I will place it in context. Several years ago, I delivered another paper to you - on the influence during 1895-1905 of one Edward G. Uihlein of Chicago and Geneva Lake, WI, on the career of the landscape architect Jens Jensen.

Since, I delivered a paper to you on the Prairie School structural and landscape architecture around Geneva and Delavan Lakes, covering the work product of several design professionals, such as Jensen, O. C. Simonds, Frank Lloyd Wright and Robert C. Spencer, Jr.

Tonight's paper could be looked upon as the third of a trilogy Uihlein will not return; none of Jensen, Simonds or Wright return; but Robert Spencer will.

Also, in June, 2000, I presented a paper at The Bi-Annual Jensen Institute at The Clearing, in Ellison Bay, Door County, WI, that compared the Geneva Lake clientele of Jensen with the Geneva Lake clientele of John C. Olmsted of Olmsted Associates of Brookline, MA. John Olmsted appears, tonight, as well.

Tonight, I will be describing the impact that Charles L. Hutchinson of Chicago (a member of The Cliff Dwellers and of our Club) had on the careers of:

- (1) John Olmsted (stepson and primary successor to the landscape design practice of the more famed Frederick Law Olmsted);
- (2) Charles Coolidge of the Boston architectural firm of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, successors to the architectural practice of Henry Hobson Richardson;
- (3) Robert Spencer - today, a virtually unrecognized Prairie School architect, but a contemporary of Frank Lloyd Wright; Spencer was best known for his writings on what, many years later, was dubbed by Thomas Tallmadge as "The Prairie School".

11/24/01

THE FIRST ACTOR - CHARLES LAWRENCE HUTCHINSON

As we have our regular meetings here at The Cliff Dwellers, you have seen, for years, a formidable formal portrait of a remarkable Chicago business and civic leader, Charles Lawrence Hutchinson, and he appears in many of the photographs that have been displayed on the walls here in The Cliff Dwellers. Hutchinson's portrait has joined us, here in this room, this evening. He is best known, today, for his Presidency of The Art Institute of Chicago (from its inception in 1888) and for his Treasurership of The University of Chicago (virtually from its inception in 1892) - both until his death in 1924. Also relevant to my paper, are Hutchinson's roles as a Trustee of The Chicago Public Library and as a Commissioner of Chicago's South Parks System.

According to the biographical essay on him by Thomas Wakefield Goodspeed, the long-time Secretary of the Board of Trustees of The University of Chicago, Hutchinson was a director of some 60 civic and charitable institutions of Chicago; he was, at one time or another, the Treasurer of many of them; and he held other official positions in most of the others. I give credit to Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz for giving Hutchinson his due.

[Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Culture and the City* (University of Chicago Press, 1967, republished, 1989, but, again, out of print.)]

Hutchinson was a "joiner", like no other "joiner" of whom I have read.

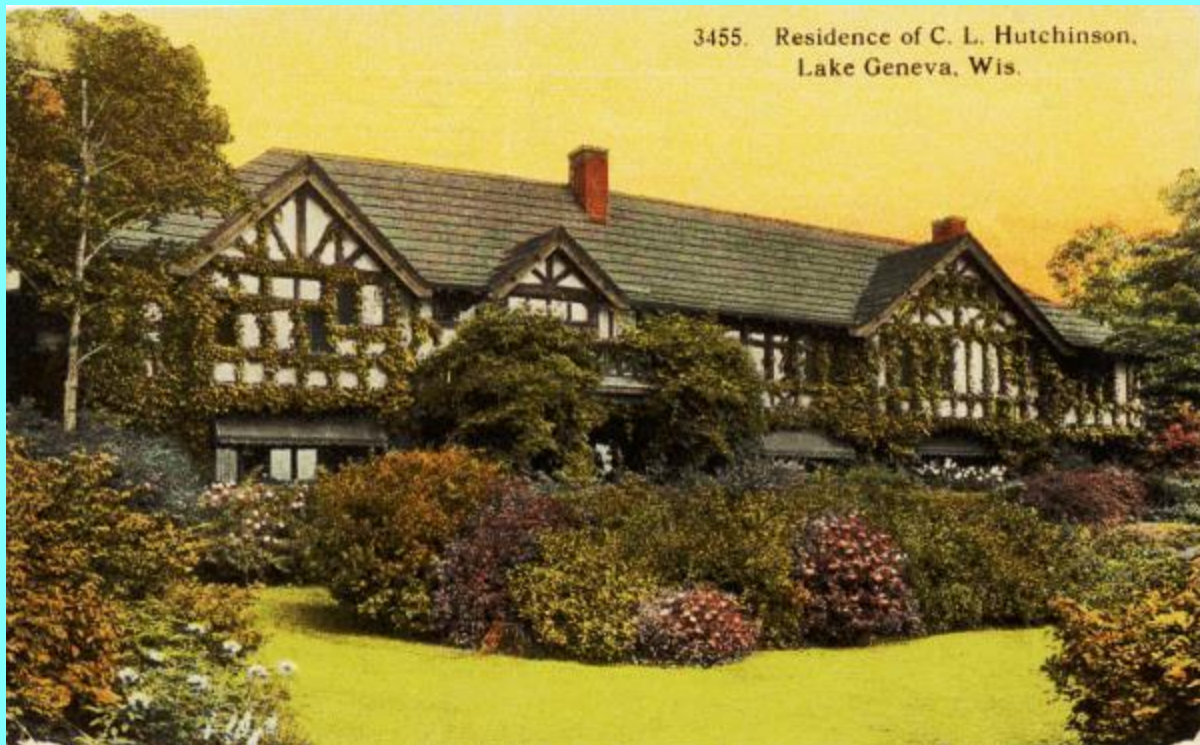
Yet, except among those involved in The Art Institute who know for whom its Hutchinson Hall was named; or those involved in The University of Chicago who know for whom its Hutchinson Quadrangle and its Hutchinson Commons were named; or those who live on or about Chicago's Hutchinson Street who know for whom that street was named, Hutchinson's name, today, is not likely to be recognized, even by those who are most active in the civic affairs of the City of Chicago in which Hutchinson had been such a "shaker and mover".

At Clark Wagner's request, I wrote the profile of Hutchinson that is included in the collection of profiles of some of our Club's most prominent members published, in celebration of our Club's recent 125th year.

Hutchinson, an organizer of The Cliff Dwellers, was its second President, serving a

two-year term (1915-1916). Hutchinson was a member of The Chicago Literary Club, joining it in 1884, and acting as its President for its 1907-1908 year, delivering 17 papers, in all. None of those papers were published by our Club. In The Newberry Library, in the Hutchinson papers given by Mrs. Hutchinson, I came across only one; it was titled: *"The Progress of the Fine Arts in the West"* (1916) and reads as if it were a speech that he had given, many times, in other venues. While, in not finding more Literary Club papers delivered by Hutchinson, I was disappointed, what Hutchinson documents are in The Newberry Library include Mr. Hutchinson's appointment diary for 1900-1904; it contains many appointments with both Olmsted and Coolidge but none with Spencer - leading me to infer that Hutchinson did not deal, directly, with Spencer until after 1904.

Hutchinson and his wife (the former Frances Kinsley, whose father was Chicago's premier caterer of the late 1880's) are interred, but have no monument, in Graceland Cemetery - only two modest headstones that are similar in appearance to those he specified there for his parents and for other members of his family. Often, at Graceland Cemetery, he is confused (as, for a time, I was) by the monument for a man of the same name (but no relation) designed by a noted sculptor named Alfeo Faggi. The Hutchinson Family plot is not in the "high rent district" of Graceland Cemetery, overlooking its Lake Willowmere; it is in an older, higher, Westerly portion of the cemetery - towards its Clark Street wall. Presently, there is little landscaping around it. Notwithstanding his close relationship with the design professionals that I will describe hereinafter, there is no evidence that either Hutchinson or his widow specified any monument or landscaping for their personal burial places. As Mrs. Hutchinson's three books indicate, their memorial was to have been their Geneva Lake home "Wychwood".



WYCHWOOD, the Charles L. Hutchinson estate on Geneva Lake's north shore, is shown on this postcard that was postmarked March 11, 1907, in Lake Geneva. The estate, built by the Hutchinsons in 1900, was named Wychwood by Mrs. Hutchinson in reference to the "Wych-hazel" that grew in many places on the grounds. The Hutchinsons developed many of the acres of woods into a wildlife sanctuary that attracted more than 60 species of birds. In 1932, the estate was given to the University of Chicago and used as an experimental and research station for students, although it was maintained as a refuge for native plants and birds. William Wrigley acquired it in the 1950s and extensively remodeled it. The old postcard is from the extensive collection belonging to John E. Brayton, of Des Plaines, Illinois, and Lake Geneva.

Hutchinson had no children. He had one brother (William, or "Willie"), but that brother never married and had no children. Hutchinson had two or three sisters; one (Kate) married the only son of a famed Chicago lawyer, Noble Brandon Judah. Judah's son, Noble, Jr., at the end of Hutchinson's life, was Hutchinson's personal lawyer; shortly prior to Mrs. Hutchinson's death, Judah, Jr., became one of the three Trustees responsible for the ongoing operation of "Wychwood".

Here is what a history of The Prairie Club, which, for many years, paid a visit in the course of its walking tours of Geneva Lake, had to say of "Wychwood":

"Nearer [our Chicago] home [than "The Dells" and Devil's Lake, WI] is a land of pure delight to the hiker, namely Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and

the knob and kettle hole country to the North and Northeast. It is ideal land for our requirements, made to order, seemingly, for it offers an easy stroll for Saturday afternoon along the path that leads through the wonderful estates that border the famous lake. Such a stroll is a 'curtain raiser' for the real walk on Sunday. On a few of our trips, we spent both Saturday afternoon and Sunday on Lake Geneva, making the entire circuit of about 25 miles. *Of all the estates along the lake, none is lovelier than "Wychwood", the home of the late Charles L. Hutchinson, art connoisseur and well-known financier and, for a long time, President of The Chicago Art Institute. Here, we were guests, many times, visiting the home harmonious, so perfectly fitting its notable setting, meeting Mr. Hutchinson, and strolling along the winding trail through the magic forest where all its native beauty and wildness has been preserved and heightened by wise and loving care.*" (italics supplied)

Source: "Outdoors With The Prairie Club", written by Members of the Club and compiled by Emma Doeserich, Mary Sherburne and Anna B. Wey (Paquin Publishers, Chicago, 1940, at p. 159)]

Hutchinson and his wife had seen to the construction of "Wychwood" in 1901-1902; it was, justly, famed for its horticulture [LeMoyne, Jenkins, Griswold, to name a few authors of high praise]. Upon Mrs. Hutchinson's death in the 1930's, The University of Chicago took over the remainder interest after Mrs. Hutchinson's life estate in "Wychwood", with an endowment provided by her. However, the University, in severe financial straits in and after the 1930's, ceased to maintain "Wychwood" in the style to which the Hutchinsons had been accustomed and her endowment had been designed to continue. As soon as a 25-year trust restriction on transfer provided for by the Hutchinsons, permitted, the University sold "Wychwood" to an individual who lopped off the upper two stories of the original residence and roofed the remaining story. My own contemporary, Bill Wrigley, demolished the balance; Bill, once, told me that the condition of the foundation did not warrant even its use for the footprint of the new house that he built on the site.

In her books, Mrs. Hutchinson had the habit of naming everyone concerned with "Wychwood" by euphemisms - for her husband: "The Man Who Always Wanted a Farm" or "The Constant Improver" or "The Master Mind" {or "The Laird of the Manor" And for herself: "The Woman Who Never Wanted a Country House". She named "The Man of Many Maps", who I believe was not the surveyor, Samuel Greeley [whose grandson died a week ago], but John Olmsted, himself, who was, also, known as "The Landscape Gardener". She named "The Friendly Architect", who I believe was Charles Coolidge, at least through the construction of the Main House,

but, perhaps, in the design of some of the interiors and its outbuildings, "The Friendly Architect" was Robert Spencer. She named "The Inevitable Trio", who I believe were "The Landscape Gardener" Olmsted), "The Architect" (Coolidge and/or Spencer, as the time warranted) and "The Owner" (her husband).

Mrs. Hutchinson was exactly correct in her characterization of her husband as "The Constant Improver", and she was aware of his influence, writing this in one of her books:

" . . . [A]fter numerous near and far connections had been safely furnished with homes of their own, institutions of various kinds utilized the architectural tastes of The Constant Improver to their great advantage."

[Source: The chapter titled "Our Country Life", circa 1912, in "Wychwood - The History of an Idea", at p. 265 (1928)]

The thesis of my paper, tonight, is that a remarkable number of Hutchinson's business and social friends turned to him to select their design professionals, not only in connection with their joint civic endeavors but even with respect to their own personal homes.

I have come to believe that Hutchinson was prone to say to his business and social friends that each of the firms with which he had worked - on The Art Institute, on The Public Library and on The University of Chicago - were firms that he could recommend to them, to get the best advice on the purchase of property and the siting and design of the residences and outbuildings thereon. There is solid documentary evidence that Hutchinson went so far as to make appointments for John Olmsted with those friends. If a friend were willing to pay the top rate and expenses of a Boston architect, I believe Hutchinson would lead that friend to Charles Coolidge; if, instead, the friend wished to control expenses by using a Chicago architect, I believe that Hutchinson would lead that friend to Robert Spencer.

While this pattern was especially true with respect to several contiguous properties on the North Shore of Geneva Lake, it was, by no means, limited to them. Not every recommendation by Hutchinson led to a successful relationship. At the end, of this paper, I will summarize several of his proposed relationship failures.

THE SECOND ACTOR - JOHN C. OLMSTED

Chicago's North Parks - the most important of which was Lincoln Park - its West Parks (the "turf" of William LeBaron Jenney and Jens Jensen) and its South Parks (the "turf" of Olmsted & Vaux and, later, of Hutchinson) were, at their inception, three

entirely different political Divisions, each managed by its own set of Commissioners, all appointed by the Governor of Illinois. These three Divisions were merged in 1934, for the sake of economy of administration, as the reduced tax revenues of all three Divisions then available to support the operation of all of Chicago's parks had been reduced by the general failure of Chicagoans to pay their real estate taxes during The Great Depression.

However, the South Park System had had a great past. In 1891, the South Park Commissioners (which included Hutchinson) acted to create parks of picturesque beauty, and obtained the services of Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) and Calvert Vaux (1824-1895) to design Jackson Park, Washington Park and the connector between them, "The Midway Plaisance". While far from all of the Olmsted/Vaux designs were implemented during the next 20 years, Jackson Park became the site of The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. While its original design was, principally, that of Olmsted, Sr., after the Exposition, Jackson Park was redesigned by John Olmsted and his then partners. In this connection, Hutchinson had to have met and dealt with all three Olmsteds- the famous father, his eldest son, John C. Olmsted - actually a step-son - and his eldest son, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (known as "Rick").

The mental health of Olmsted, the father, deteriorated in the early 1890's to an extent that has become general knowledge only since the publication in 1999 of his latest biography - by Withold Rybczinski. The ongoing administration of the Olmsted Firm fell, after Charles Eliot died in 1897, principally, upon John. While essays on the career of John Olmsted have been published, there will not be a full-length biography of him until that by Arleyn Levee, now in preparation, appears. These essays suggest to me that John Olmsted, while not having all of the design skill of his father, had no peer as an administrator. This is what a book review of the recently published *"Pioneers of American Landscape Design"* had to say of what Ms. Levee had written on John Olmsted:

. . . [Frederick Law] Olmsted's stepson and son, John C. Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., . . . continued the Olmsted firm for 25 years after their father retired in 1895. It was the largest landscape architecture business in the country. John C., not only headed it, he was also active in organizations that promoted the profession; as first President of the American Society of Landscape Architects, he had much to say about early standards of practice and membership. . . ."

My own research in the Archives of The Library of Congress into the extensive documentation maintained there of the operations of the Olmsted Firm has led me conclude that, while John could be deemed to have been obsessive in his assiduous preparation of site reports (handwritten, I think, and later transcribed) that he sent

back to his Firm's Home Office in Brookline, MA, they are a treasure trove of evidence - sometimes gossip - of his dealings with his Firm's clients and their representatives. While John Olmsted appears to have induced "Rick" to use the same practice of written reports to the Firm's Home Office, those of Rick's that I have reviewed in another connection do not contain the detail (or the gossip) that those of John contain.

"Rick" Olmsted had spent some time working in Daniel Burnham's planning office for the Exposition and appears to have impressed Hutchinson's closest friend (and husband of Carrie, one of Hutchinson's few first cousins), Martin A. Ryerson, who, in 1895, had made an effort to divert Rick from his ongoing work at Biltmore - George Vanderbilt's estate in Asheville, NC - but Rick declined. "Rick" Olmsted, who was more than ten years younger than John, also had considerable skill as a designer of landscapes. Because there appears to me to have been an agreement among John and Rick that East Coast projects were to be executed by "Rick", and Chicago area projects were to be executed by John, "Rick" does not figure in this paper other than this 1895 contact with him by Ryerson.

In contrast, to Rick's avoidance of Ryerson, John Olmsted took the opportunity created by his firm's ongoing South Park Commission work to create and maintain relationships with the Chicagoans with whom his father had dealt in connection with the Exposition. In time, John Olmsted's principal Chicago contact became Hutchinson.

THE THIRD ACTOR - CHARLES COOLIDGE

The Boston firm of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge - successor to the fine architectural practice of Henry Hobson Richardson - known best, now, in Chicago for his design of the Glessner residence - had had a prominent role in connection with The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893; and it was the designer of The Art Institute of Chicago and of The Chicago Public Library. The Shepley Firm partner in charge of Chicago projects was Charles Coolidge. Coolidge designed the dining room set and partner's desk that can be seen, today, in the Glessner House.

In 1901, Coolidge, because of the inattention of Henry Ives Cobb to the ongoing development of The University of Chicago, supplanted Cobb as the ongoing architect in charge of the design of greater part of the University's construction, and, because of dissatisfaction among the Trustees and the Faculty with the design style of O. C. Simonds, John Olmsted supplanted Simonds. By this time, Hutchinson was a Trustee of The University of Chicago and Chair of its Buildings and Grounds Committee. It is said that, in preparation for Coolidge's work for The University of Chicago,

Hutchinson took Coolidge for a lengthy visit to Cambridge University.

The successful relationships generated by Coolidge in the course of his Firm's work for The University of Chicago resulted in the assignment to Coolidge of the design of residences on Geneva Lake and elsewhere that are of some architectural value. Since I am neither trained nor have the natural eye necessary to provide reliable commentary on the Shepley firm's architectural style, I am not evaluating the merit of the Shepley firm's designs; my effort has been to identify and analyze the social relationships of these men, only with a view to suggest the remarkable personal influence over his peers of Charles Lawrence Hutchinson. I cannot resist, however, relating this remark to me of a knowledgeable prominent architect: "The work product of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge has, generally, said to have been 'Simply Rotten & Foolish'".

THE LAST ACTOR - ROBERT C. SPENCER, JR.

In The Chicago Public Library, the design and execution of the mosaics that are in the South stair well are, frequently and erroneously, credited to the Tiffany Studios. In fact, their design was by a former Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge employee, Robert C. Spencer, Jr., and their execution was by a former Tiffany employee - the man who went on to do the mosaics that you can see, today, in the Marquette Building in the Loop - J. L. Holzer. Spencer also provided a design (never executed) for mosaics for the once contemplated dome for The Art Institute's Allerton Hall. In both connections, Spencer's work product would have been known to Hutchinson. This is how I believe that Hutchinson and Spencer met.

In the past, I have told you of the Gatekeeper's Lodge of "Wychwood", readily visible to anyone driving Geneva Lake's Snake Road (a part of its North Lake Shore Drive). The Gatekeeper's Lodge has been a generally recognized Robert Spencer design, and I have speculated to you that Spencer had designed all of the outbuildings of "Wychwood" and much of the interiors of the Main Residence.

[Note: My recent review of Mrs. Hutchinson's books has led me to believe that the extant structure used as a Gardener's Lodge was, instead, a mirror image of the original Gardner's Lodge - the original - since vanished - having been constructed immediately across the entrance drive.)

I was, first, led to this speculation by the following sentences in Spencer's biographical entries:

". . . While practicing in Chicago, [Spencer] . . . was particularly well known for his designs for country homes, including those for **Charles L. Hutchinson** and **Harlow N. Higinbotham**. . . "; and

". . . [In 1891,] Mr. Spencer returned to Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, re-entering their Chicago office to take direct charge of the interior design and decoration of The Chicago Public Library, many of the rich details of marble, mosaic and plaster in this building being from his hand. Since 1895, Mr. Spencer has actively practiced his profession in Chicago, where he has gained a national reputation as a designer of charming country houses, examples of his work being found in the estates of such well-known Chicagoans as **Charles L. Hutchinson** [on Geneva Lake, WI], **Harlow N. Higinbotham** [near Joliet, IL], **Charles A. Stevens** [on Delavan Lake, WI] and **E. A. Hamill** [in Lake Forest, IL]. . . ." (emphasis supplied)

[Sources: *National Cyclopedia of American Biography* - 1958 volume and *Historical Review of Chicago and Cook County*; and *Selected Biography*, published by The Lewis Publishing Company of Chicago and New York in 1908, A. N. Waterman, A.B., LL.D., Editor]

The first quotation was likely to have been supplied by Spencer's family, long after the event; the second was composed by Spencer, himself.

In the past, I have summarized for you the solid evidence (Spencer's name on some of the construction documents) that Spencer was the design architect for the Lake Geneva Country Club and for Lake Geneva's Horticultural Hall. For tonight's paper, it was equally important that Hutchinson was the signer, on behalf of both Owners, of the Architect's and the General Contractor's contracts for both projects. I, also, previously summarized for you what I had found of two other designs by Spencer on or near Geneva Lake (the Emma L. T. Martin residence on the West End of Geneva Lake - "Deepwood" - and the Gardener's Residence on the Stevens Estate on Delavan Lake).

Robert Spencer had been an outstanding architectural student at MIT, having won, as a result of his studies there, a coveted scholarship that permitted a year's trip to Europe. He had been with the Boston office of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge until he returned to the Midwest in 1895(his place of origin having been Milwaukee). He established an independent architectural practice in Chicago in the Steinway Building, which had been designed by Dwight Perkins; Perkins attracted to his office the young architects who, later, became known as The Prairie School.

Thus, by 1900, Hutchinson would have aware of John Olmsted's skill as a landscape designer, of Charles Coolidge's skill as a architect of structures, and of Robert Spencer's skill as a designer of interiors. In the early years of the 1900's Hutchinson

became Treasurer of The University of Chicago and Chair of its Buildings & Grounds Committee. The President of The University's Board of Trustees, from its resurrection in 1892, was Martin A. Ryerson, whose wife, Carrie (daughter of Hutchinson's father's brother, for whom our Charles Hutchinson was named, masking Carrie a first cousin of our Charles Hutchinson).

Coolidge and John Olmsted had worked on Chicago projects, closely and effectively, for years. Coolidge caused Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge to open a Chicago office, and Olmsted, frequently, worked out of it. Spencer had worked with Coolidge, and he was, soon, to work with Olmsted.

THE ACTORS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED; THE SCENE HAS BEEN SET

After moving from his first marital home in Hyde Park, Hutchinson saw to the construction of a residence at 2709 Prairie Avenue, Chicago. I do not, yet, know who the architect was. In the archives of the Shepley Firm in Boston, I have seen a photograph of the gateway of that house. In time, I expect that I will identify him. One of Hutchinson's Prairie Avenue neighbors was John J. Glessner, whose residence at 1800 Prairie Avenue, the design of which was by Richardson; because of Richardson's death in 1886, the completion of its construction was supervised by the Shepley Firm. Mr. Glessner was as civically active a Chicagoan as was Charles Hutchinson - including being a Trustee of The Art Institute, a member of The Cliff Dwellers and of our Club [The Chicago Literary Club] - but he avoided the civic titles to which Hutchinson agreed.

In the archives of Olmsted Associates in The Library of Congress is an 1888 letter from Mr. Glessner to Frederick Law Olmsted (the father) from which the following has been taken:

"Some days ago I wrote my friend **C. A. Coolidge** to ask you to go with him to Littleton, N. H. to look at my farm. He is to make plans for some alterations in the buildings, and I very much wish your advice about what should be done to improve and beautify the place without interfering too much with nature. Mr. Coolidge writes that he has seen you, and that you and he will go about August 20th. . . ." (emphasis supplied)

Because of its several typos in the address of a later letter by Coolidge to the Olmsted Firm, I read this letter as a first introduction of Coolidge to Mr. Olmsted, Sr., but an introduction that led to no immediate relationship of consequence.

[Source: March, 1895, letter from Coolidge to the Olmsted Firm, addressed with Olmsted misspelled twice and Eliot misspelled once - to

Olmstead, with an "a", Olmstead, with that "a", & Elliott (with two "l"s and two t"s.])

This letter is among the earliest of the 1895 correspondence relating to a decision by the Trustees of The Art Institute of Chicago (led by Charles Hutchinson) to use the services of the Olmsted Firm in connection with the landscape surrounding the then first structure (extant) of The Art Institute of Chicago, the architect of which was Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, with Charles Coolidge, lead partner for the project. The tenor of the language used between Coolidge and John Olmsted was that of peers; by then, Coolidge had his contract for the structure; and Olmsted had his contract for the design of its surrounding landscape.

My Geneva Lake story starts in 1898, when Hutchinson's closest friend, Ryerson (another member of The Cliff Dwellers and of our Club) purchased a second home for himself "Bonnie Brae" [extant] on Geneva Lake, WI. Hutchinson, often, visited the Ryersons at there, and Ryerson accorded the Hutchinsons full use of his lake steam yacht. Because of the then very poor condition of the local roads, water transportation - the best of which was by lake steamers - was necessary for local transportation.

Hutchinson set himself to acquiring Geneva Lake lakefront property for his own use, and he did so in 1901. He secured the services of John Olmsted, to provide an overall design for the long stretch of lake frontage that he planned to purchase - a stretch far more than appropriate for any one, single second home - no matter how large. Consequently, during the next few years, Hutchinson set tried to find neighbors for himself.

One of the first men that he approached was the Chief Executive Officer of the bank (Corn Exchange Bank) that he (Hutchinson) controlled: Ernest A. Hamill. Hamill appears not to have been interested in Geneva Lake property (although, some years later, he funded a building at Geneva Lake's Conference Point Camp). Instead of accepting Hutchinson's offer, Hamill purchased a parcel in Lake Forest, IL, from the Larned Family. While I expected this Hamill decision to take him out of my scope of interest, Hutchinson recommended that Hamill use John Olmsted as a landscape design professional. During his 1904 trips to Chicago, Olmsted met with Hamill several times and developed a landscape plan. The time came to select an architect. One of John Olmsted's memoranda to his Home Office states, in this connection includes:

". . . [Mr. Hamill] also told me that he was puzzled in his choice of an architect by the fact that three excellent architects, who were also intimate friends, lived in Lake Forest. This included Frost, of Frost & Granger and [Howard Van Doren] Shaw and one other. He also liked Charlie Coolidge. He **said that he would be guided largely by the**

advice of Mr. Hutchinson, who was his mentor in matters of taste."
(emphasis supplied)

[Source: Archives of Olmsted Associates in The Library of Congress, to which my attention was invited by Arthur Miller of the Library of Lake Forest College.]

"Mentor in matters of taste" - that phrase was the Genesis of this paper. Robert Spencer had designed Hamill's home, which came to be known as "Ballyatwood".

[Ernest Hamill's "Ballyatwood" must be distinguished from the residence of Hamill's son, Alfred Hamill - "The Centaurs" - designed by David Adler.]

While Spencer's "Ballyatwood" has survived, it has been substantially altered, so that Spencer's original design cannot be recognized. However, what has survived, in a pristine state, is the Spencer-designed Gatehouse for "Ballyatwood".

[The Gatehouse is, now occupied by David Bahlman, Executive Director of The Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois.]

It is a Prairie Style residence, some of whose details bring to mind the Gatehouse for Hutchinson's "Wychwood".

Much has been written of the Hutchinson's "Wychwood", including three full-length books by Mrs. Hutchinson. Early on, I, quite mistakenly, assumed that, since Spencer had designed the "Wychwood" Gatehouse, he would have designed the "Wychwood" main house. Paul Kruty of The University of Illinois-Urbana disabused me of that notion, saying that all recognized attributions of the design of the main house are to Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge - Charles Coolidge's firm. Having looked in the records of the current successor to the Shepley Firm [Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott of Boston - Rob Roche Archivist] of the design of "Wychwood" (said by the Shepley Firm's internal archivist to have been only a "small project" for his Firm) that remain, I have come to agree with Kruty's attribution of the design of the structure, of its exterior and of some of its interior to Coolidge; however, the log of the Shepley Firm's plans for the interior of "Wychwood" stops in the middle of a page, with only a fraction of the interior having been designed. I speculate that, at that point, the Hutchinsons said to Coolidge, "Would you mind a great deal, if we finished the interior of our house, using Robert Spencer. And he can design the still needed outbuildings, as well." As Spencer had been a valued employee of the Shepley Firm both in Boston and in Chicago, Coolidge could not have, gracefully, objected. Besides, Coolidge had a bigger fish to fry: Norman Harris, to whom Hutchinson was about to sell a good length of his lake frontage.

Before going on to Harris, it is worth saying a bit more of the interior of "Wychwood"

that was not mentioned in the project log of the Shepley Firm, and of its outbuildings. The first book on "Wychwood" that Mrs. Hutchinson wrote contained a great many good quality photographs of the exterior, of the finished interior and of many outbuildings. Because John Olmsted was a good photographer, and he had a habit of taking many photographs of anything potentially relevant to his projects, I believe that he is likely to have been the photographer of the generally published photographs of "Wychwood" copies of a few of which are in Mrs. Hutchinson's first book (the only one of her three that was illustrated. The other photographs in Mrs. Hutchinson's first book are not of such quality. Were she to have used only photographs taken by Olmsted, one would think that she would have accorded him credit, but no such credit appears. Besides, she seems to have referred to Olmsted as only as "The Man of Many Maps" and "the Landscape Gardener, not as "The Man of Many Photographs".

The interiors of "Wychwood", to me are typical of a Prairie Style residence - Spencer's then preferred style. Similarly, the outbuildings are of relatively simple, but architecturally styled, utilitarian structures typical of the early Prairie Style.

I have paid special attention to the common wall boathouses, the construction of which Hutchinson authorized on a corner of his remaining property, a short way to the East of his "Wychwood". In this connection, I return to a 1902 John Olmsted memorandum to his Home Office created in connection with a small project on Ryerson's Geneva Lake property that Olmsted had performed for him after 1898:

"Among the ugly circumstances in connection with your place are the two large steam yacht houses. That of your neighbor is less objectionable than your own in appearance but both are objectionable. We should strongly recommend you persuade your neighbor to remove his boathouse to the vicinity of the village of Lake Geneva where, in fact, **all the boathouses which now disfigure the lake should be concentrated.** We can see no very particular advantage in having these boat houses on each place and if the present custom continues the beauty of the lake will be much more injured than it is now, so that it would be worth a great effort to start the custom of storing the steam launches all at the same place. . . ." (emphasis supplied)

Mrs. Hutchinson's version of these events is this:

"Most people, when building a pier on their shore line, expect the pier to remain on that spot to the end of time - I mean their time. Imagine my amazement, then, when, one day, I caught a remark about 'moving the pier'. If the Constant Improver had, casually, said that he thought of moving the house, I could not have been more surprised."

". . . 'But, where will you put it? . . . We must have one, you know.' For I am, always, dreading the moment when the Constant Improver's strong sense of the beautiful will overcome his practical ideas."

"I think that it will go on the other side of the island and entirely be out of the way."

"As usual, he was right. . . . In the Spring, when the pier was put out, we found it a much more attractive spot at which to anchor, . . . Where the pier formerly stood, a long seat now commands a lovely view of rippling water and dented shore.

". . . [O]ne year, there seemed to be nothing especial on hand, and I detected a brooding gaze on the plenty-good enough garage, and overheard sentences beginning, 'If I were to build again' - which were ominous signs. Luckily, at this moment, the subject of boathouses came up. Now, we had no boat; and, if we had, the Constant Improver [Mr. Hutchinson] did not approve of boathouses, as they disfigured the shore. But our neighbors who had boats did approve of them, and there was a good deal of discussion as to size, location, etc. Whereat the Master Mind [Mr. Hutchinson, again] became interested and, finally, said, 'If you three men [Harris, Swift and Bartlett] are going to build three boathouses on the shore, do let me think it over and submit a plan."

"Nothing loath. They consented. Now was the Laird of the Manor [Mr. Hutchinson, again] happy, again; with paper, pad and ruler, he made mysterious measurements, he telephoned for necessary dimensions, he paced off bits of forest, he hung papers on long strings, and [he] went out in a rowboat to judge the effect. He even deigned to consult the Friendly Architect [Spencer?] about possible weights and measures. Very busy, indeed, were all his spare moments, now, and very inscrutable his countenance. At last, his plan was ready, and he called his neighbors together, for consultation."

"'You know that low piece of ground next to me in the thick woods?' he began. 'Well, that can be bought [from me], and you can put your three boathouses there, in one building. Each man will own the lot under his house; there will be no connection between them; and, yet, the general effect will be of one admirable building.'" . . .

"Placed sixty feet back from the shore, . . . the wide trellised structure of

smooth cement blocks presented anything but a conventional appearance. A broad wooden band disguised the necessary slope of the roof, the beautifully proportioned brown trellis concealed the awkward doors and divided the length into agreeable panels; and the cement blocks, put up with heavy mortar, made so pleasing a surface that the first idea of lines was abandoned. . . . With bushes planted thickly in front of this structure, with trees bending over it, no one can say that it disfigures the shore line. Indeed, it seems to nestle down into the landscape and become part of the forest. . . ."

[Source: The chapter titled "Our Country Life, circa 1912",
in "*Wychwood - The History of an Idea*", at pp. 261-266
(1928)]

In short, in 1910, Hutchinson persuaded Bartlett, Chapin and Harris - to consolidate their boathouses into one common-walled structure. Some years later, having obtained a general contractor's copy of the three extant, boathouses, Swift added his. Neither Hutchinson nor a sixth neighbor [Glennon] ever added the boathouse to which he was entitled. I speculate that, since Hutchinson had the use, on call, of Ryerson's steam yacht, he never bothered to see to the construction of a boathouse for himself. The sixth participant died before doing anything in this regard.

The first three common-wall boathouses [Bartlett, Chapin and Swift] were a single structure of a basic design in concrete block. In those days, concrete block was a new product; its quality was uneven, and its surface reflected that unevenness. Often, it was made of larger pebbles that we, today, would see. We know that, in 1915, Spencer specified concrete block for Lake Geneva's Horticultural Hall and for the Lake Geneva Country Club. The current owner of the common wall boathouses [Walter Larkin] tells me that he has located in the yards of the concrete block firm of Zenda, WI [Polyock], the forms for the concrete blocks used for all of the boathouses, the three of 1910 and that added in 1920. The Zenda firm is the successor to the contractor for both Lake Geneva's Horticultural Hall and the Lake Geneva Country Club [Reinert & Malsch]. Of these three structures, the concrete blocks used in the 1910 boathouses are somewhat larger in size and the most uneven. Those used in 1915 for Horticultural Hall and the Lake Geneva Country Club are smaller and far less uneven. Those used in 1920 for the fourth boathouse revert to the large size, but they are far less uneven than the 1910 version.

I suggest that it was Spencer who designed the first three of these concrete block structures. [The last boathouse was, I think, an addition done by the original contractor, using a permutation of the 1910 plans.] On the construction and architectural contracts of both Horticultural Hall and the Lake Geneva Country Club,

Hutchinson's name, as President. With respect to the boathouses, while I have not found the construction contracts, Hutchinson's deeds to his neighbors covering their boathouse properties retained for Hutchinson "design control" of whatever was constructed. I believe that Hutchinson exercised that design control by specifying that only Spencer's designs were to be used.

Norman W. Harris: Returning to Hutchinson's Geneva Lake real estate development efforts, I turn, first, to Norman W. Harris, founder of what is, now, Chicago's Harris Bank. That Hutchinson was well acquainted with Harris is obvious from the fact that each controlled a substantial Chicago bank. By the Fall of 1904, Hutchinson had arranged a set of real estate exchanges that resulted in the creation of two fine parcels of lake frontage immediately to the West of his own "Wychwood". He persuaded both men to use the services of John Olmsted, and they entered into what my experience in land development is rare - a joint venture agreement between the owners, in which all disputes were to be resolved, as follows:

" . . . A landscape architect shall be jointly engaged to lay out the grounds for driveways, walks and water views, at our joint expense, pro rata according to the cost of the land purchased, and, in case of any difference of opinion between us, the landscape architect employed as above named shall decide, his opinion to be final among us; . . . "

In the early stages of development of their homes, Harris and Swift had no difficulties with each other. The Geneva Lake houses that Coolidge designed for Hutchinson and Harris were distinctive, with Hutchinson's a Shingle Style on the low end, and Harris vying for a grandiosity award. Swift used Howard Van Doren Shaw as the architect for his "Villa Hortensia" [named for Swift's wife]. The houses for Harris and Swift exist, today, in good condition.

[The Harris property is, often, opened by Richard DrieHaus, the present owner, for events for Chicago and Geneva Lake area charities.]

I am told by a knowledgeable friend that, in a difficult economic time - probably The Financial Panic of 1907, Swift approached Harris for a loan. The request was not granted. The relationship between the two men cooled, and John Olmsted has to have earned his decision-maker's fee, negotiating the siting of each house, with Swift and Shaw on one hand and Harris and Coolidge on the other, so that its views would not be obstructed by the placement of the other's.

[The spite fence that is now between the Harris and Swift properties is a quite modern insert; that there was none in Harris' and Swift's time is to the credit of John Olmsted.]

Simeon B. Chapin: The joint agreement between Harris and Swift went on to provide:

". . . [I]t [is] mutually desired to lay out about the north one half of said lots into a joint park with Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Chapin, with a winding driveway running about east and west across and connecting the different estates . . . and at the same time as many drives and walks therein as can be obtained with good landscape effects."

Simeon B. Chapin was the next neighbor to the West of Harris. Olmsted used good efforts to obtain the agreement of Hutchinson, Harris, Swift and Chapin to the joint driving park contemplated by Hutchinson, but he was not successful. The difficulties between Harris and Swift just described were not the only obstacle. In 1904, Hutchinson suggested to Chapin that he (Chapin) use Olmsted to suggest landscape design changes for Chapin's property that would cause its lake frontage visual effects to be integrated with those of Harris, Swift and Hutchinson. Olmsted walked the property with Chapin, probably commenting, as he went, and he wrote his customary detailed letter to the client and Memorandum to the Home Office file. Chapin paid the fee therefor, but he did nothing that Olmsted suggested. There is a testiness in Olmsted's Home Office Memorandum that is not present in any of the several dozen other such Memoranda that I have read in the Olmsted Brothers' Archive in The Library of Congress. I read between the lines that, because Olmsted urged that Chapin redo everything that Chapin, himself, had done, these good men got off on the wrong foot.

A. C. Bartlett: In 1905, however, Hutchinson persuaded A. C. Bartlett of Chicago [an active member of The Chicago Literary Club and a Trustee of The University of Chicago] for 40 years) to take on from him another fine lake front parcel. This became "House in the Woods" [extant, owned by Patrick Ryan of AON Corporation]. Its architect was Howard Van Doren Shaw, the architect of the Swift house. While Hutchinson successfully urged John Olmsted on Bartlett, Hutchinson had nothing to do with the selection of Shaw; one of Bartlett's sons did: the artist, Frederick C. Bartlett [a member of The Cliff Dwellers and briefly (1901- 1903) a member of our Club]. The following is from a Memorandum to the Home Office of Olmsted Associates:

: "[I] went with [Mr. Hutchinson] to Lake Geneva. He said Mr. Bartlett was away and he (**Mr. Hutchinson**) is going to Italy Saturday, and today [he] **was the only one [who] could talk over house site, etc., as Mr. Bartlett's representative, so we could go on with our plans. . . .**" [emphasis supplied]

And from a letter from John Olmsted to Frederick Bartlett (the son):

"We are glad to hear from you, as **it seemed rather odd to have been employed by Mr. Hutchinson to visit the place and not to have had any communication whatever with the owner.**" [emphasis supplied]

While some of the poor communication was a result of serious illness of Mr. Bartlett, in time he recovered, to enjoy his house and landscape, with the creation of which he had had little to do, other than see to payment.

Yerkes Observatory: The last successful Olmsted project initiated by Hutchinson was the landscape design for Yerkes Observatory of The University of Chicago, in Williams Bay at the West End of Geneva Lake. This is from a 1905 John Olmsted memorandum to the Olmsted Firm's Home Office:

"[Mr. Hutchinson] said as to Yerkes Observatory at Lake Geneva, he felt the open ground immediately about the building ought to be improved and that if it did not cost too much, he and Mr. Ryerson would employ us to plan and advise as to these improvements so he could transfer his surplus shrubs there. . . ."

Only some of that design was executed, and what was executed has not been maintained other than by removal of trees that died (many of which were elms that attracted Dutch elm disease. There is occasion talk of its restoration, but I suspect that the greater risk is the University's abandonment of Yerkes Observatory, just as it abandoned "Wychwood".

Otto Young: The first design effort at Geneva Lake for John Olmsted was in 1900 for Otto Young [born J U N G]. There is a long, typical John Olmsted Memorandum to the Home Office file that contains:

". . . The architect is Henry Lord Gay. The house is large and fireproof, and the interior finish is hardwood. Such a house might easily cost \$300,000, possibly \$400,000. [Multiply by 20, to approximate in today's dollars - \$6,000,000 - \$8,000,000.] Mr. Young, however, seems very averse to any similarly expensive work on the grounds and will agree to no drives or courtyards or terraces or formal gardens that involve cutting trees and even heavy grading. Also, **he wants to design the grounds, himself, by way of amusement.**" (emphasis supplied)

Needless to say, there was no further involvement of the Olmsted Firm in Mr. Young's affairs. I have no reason to believe that Hutchinson had anything to do with Young's consideration of the Olmsted Firm.

[Curiously, in Robert Grese's 1992 list of Jens Jensen projects, there is one for Otto Young - the evidence thereof is too skimpy to make any surmises as to what Jensen may have done for Young, other than nothing.]

Edward Ayer: Another early Geneva Lake project for John Olmsted was that in 1901 for Edward Ayer. In this one, Charles Hutchinson had a hand; this is from another John Olmsted Memorandum to the Home Office:

"Arrived about 4:00 PM in Mr. Ryerson's steam launch. . . . Mr. Ayer said he was very fond of boulders and has saved a lot of them - big ones - when clearing his pastures and fields back of the public road. He had contemplated using them in the vicinity of the mouth of the brook. I said that he could do so very properly if they were not piled regularly like cannon balls. . . ."

"Walked about the home grounds with Mrs. Ayer and learned her views and advised her as to numerous planting questions. She does not care for boulders but likes brilliant floral displays and all sorts of striking and interesting features. She prefers to cut down the native trees and plant exotic ones, and Mr. Ayer prefers the native trees, because they harmonize with the surroundings better. I agreed with him and advised a few foreign trees that have been planted in the hollow be cut out. . . . As they want a good screen along the west boundary to hide the numerous cheap cottages of Harvard Camp, . . ."

There is irony in that last sentence, because, according to the lore of the adjacent Harvard Camp (which has, just celebrated its own Centennial), Mr. Ayer had created it as a place for his personal friends from Harvard to come to Geneva Lake and stay. Probably, this had been Mr. Ayer's goal, because Ayer's father had been the founder of Harvard, IL, the "milk cow town" just to the South of the West End of Geneva Lake. Overall, Ayer did little, in response to Olmsted's recommendations. However, in Ayer's case, I doubt that Ayer was a Chapin or a Young. I suspect that Mrs. Ayer's taste for "exotica" overcame Mr. Ayer's taste for the "naturalistic", and the Ayers, essentially, went their own way.

William Robert Linn: This prosperous member of The Chicago Board of Trade was a near neighbor (2709 South Michigan Avenue) of the Hutchinson's took an interest in a property on the North Shore of Geneva Lake that was a bit to the West of the Hutchinsons' frontage. While a 1902 Linn project is on the list of projects of the Olmsted Firm, there is no extant drawing or memorandum indicating that there was anything done; because of the date, I speculate that Hutchinson suggested to John Olmsted that Linn could be a client for him, and nothing came to pass; no Linn residence on Geneva Lake was built on the parcel attributed to him.

[Linn's son Howard married Lucy McCormick Blair, and the two of them cut a considerable swatch in Chicago's civic, charitable and social

affairs; they are not, however, mentioned in connection with the properties of prominent Chicagoans on Geneva Lake.]

Frederick W. Countiss: Countiss was a partner of Chapin; there is a 1912 Harris letter to John Olmsted, suggesting that Olmsted contact Countiss; nothing appears to come of that reference; one cannot, in this case, give credit, directly, to Hutchinson for this prospect.

Harlow N. Higinbotham: I have reflected, some, on whether Hutchinson had anything to do with the selection by Harlow N. Higinbotham (son of the Marshall Field partner who was in charge of The World's Columbia Exposition of 1893) of Robert Spencer as architect for his - the son's - house near Joliet - "Harlowarden". The senior Higinbotham had commissioned from Daniel Burnham the designs for the [extant] Joliet Public Library and a second home [not extant] for himself in his home town of Joliet, IL - a house in which his wife declined to live. Some years later, his son commissioned from Spencer a nearby [extant] residence for himself, as well as the design for the [now much modified] Joliet Country Club, which has a fireplace with the same familial coat of arms as the younger Higinbotham's residence. Hutchinson and both Higinbothams, certainly, were well acquainted. One can imagine the younger Higinbotham looking to Hutchinson for a recommendation of an architect who could be expected to provide a design less expensive than one from Burnham and who could be expected to make himself available to supervise its construction. I suggest that Hutchinson suggested Spencer to the younger Higinbotham. No Olmsted was involved in its landscape design.

[In one instance, Hutchinson's enthusiasm for Coolidge could have cost The University of Chicago the building that Annie McClure Hitchcock wished to give to the University in memory of her husband. Mrs. Hitchcock indicated her willingness in 1899; probably without realizing that Mrs. Hitchcock had funded Dwight Perkins' years at MIT, Hutchinson asked Coolidge to prepare sketches for it. Mrs. Hitchcock advised the Trustees of the University that her gift was conditioned on Perkins doing the architectural work on it. Perkins advised the Trustees that he would be willing to work with Coolidge on its design; Coolidge declined; thus, the University has its Hitchcock Hall.]

In closing, I reflected a bit on the differences between the clientele around Geneva Lake of the clientele of John Olmsted and of Jens Jensen. We do know that John Olmsted knew Jensen. The following is from a 1906 Olmsted Memorandum to his Home Office:

"Arrived at Lake Geneva by train due 10:10 AM. Met Warren H. Manning going to [Henry H.] Porter's [Maple Lawn]) and [Jens] Jensen [going to J. B. Grommes' Allview] and came with them in train. . . ."

While Jensen had substantial projects scattered about Geneva Lake (and on Delavan Lake), John Olmsted's only substantial projects around Geneva Lake were those for Hutchinson, Harris, Swift, Bartlett and the Yerkes Observatory; all but the Yerkes Observatory are subdivisions by Hutchinson of his own property; they are in a string on the North Shore of Geneva Lake. Yerkes Observatory could be deemed an extension of John Olmsted's design work for The University of Chicago. Hutchinson effected little with Ayer and Ryerson, and he effected nothing with Young, Chapin or Linn. In each of the five projects of substance, I suggest that none would have come to John Olmsted, were it not for Charles Hutchinson. In two of his three near misses (Chapin, Ayer and, probably, Linn), the catalyst, had any of these projects come to fruition, would have been Hutchinson. Elsewhere than around Geneva Lake, Hutchinson was the catalyst for Hamill, and he is likely to have been the catalyst for Higinbotham.

I have, also, reflected a bit on the differences between the clientele on Geneva Lake of Charles Coolidge (Hutchinson and Harris) and those of Spencer. Needless to say, Hutchinson had a great deal to do with the Harris' architectural assignment to Coolidge. Yet, elsewhere, Spencer is, persistently, in the background and getting a substantial share - perhaps because he was known to have trained in Coolidge's Boston and Chicago offices after graduating from MIT. Spencer had on his Project List an executed design for The Chicago Public Library, an unexecuted design for The Art Institute, executed designs for Lake Geneva's Horticultural Hall and for the Lake Geneva Country Club and, I think, executed designs for "Wychwood" interiors and outbuildings (and, perhaps, its common-wall boathouses).

Hutchinson had at least one other connection with the leaders of the Prairie School: Wilhelm Miller of The University of Illinois at Urbana, the acknowledged proponent of the Prairie School Style in architectural and landscape design. The following is from a 1915 letter from Hutchinson to Miller:

"Have arranged for you to give your lecture on landscape gardening in the Middle West at Lake Geneva on Saturday evening next. I will meet you at Lake Geneva upon arrival of the 3:40 train from Chicago. Get off at the Lake Geneva station. C L Hutchinson"

One purpose of Hutchinson's invitation to Miller was Mrs. Hutchinson's publication in 1907 of her first book on their Geneva Lake home "Our Country Home". Another purpose could have been the formal opening of Lake Geneva's Horticultural Hall. Later, Miller provided Mrs. Hutchinson an exceedingly friendly comment on "Wychwood" for one of her books on it. [Frances Kinsley Hutchinson, "Wychwood" (The Lakeside Press, Chicago, 1928)] For my purposes, tonight, however, I imagine Hutchinson having said to his friends:

"John Olmsted is the only landscape designer that you should use; if you wish an East Coast architectural firm for your country house that will cost you 'top dollar', you should use Charles Coolidge of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge; if you do not want to spend 'top dollar', and you want someone on the cutting edge of new design ideas, use Robert Spencer of Chicago."

* * *

THANK YOU!

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NAOP: The Master List of Design Projects in Wisconsin by the Olmsted Firm 1857-1950

Young, Otto Lake Geneva, WI 0201 undated

Linn, W. R. Lake Geneva, WI 0276 1902

Hutchinson, C. L. Lake Geneva, WI 0416 1901-1902

Ayer, Edward E. Lake Geneva, WI 1420 no date

Ryerson, M. A. Lake Geneva, WI 2287 1902-1903

Harris, N. W./Harris & Swift Lake Geneva, WI 2987 1904-1915

Swift, Edward F./Swift & Co. Lake Geneva, WI 3002 no date

Bartlett, A. C. Lake Geneva, WI 3038 1905-1907

Harris, N. W. Lake Geneva, WI 3040 no date

Yerkes Observatory/U. of Chicago Lake Geneva, WI 3079 1905-1906

Harris, Albert W. Lake Geneva, WI 3744 no date

Countiss, Frederick H. Lake Geneva, WI 5679 no date

Harris, N. W. Lake Geneva, WI 5776 no date

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Excerpt from the 1907 edition of Marquis' The Book of Chicagoans, the first edition of what became "Who's Who of Chicago":

"HUTCHINSON, Charles L., banker; born in Lynn, MA, on March 7, 1854; son of Benjamin P. and Sarah Ingalls Hutchinson; has lived in Chicago since 1856; graduated from Chicago High School in 1873; (Honorary A.M. degree from Tufts College in 1901); married Frances, daughter of Herbert M. Kinsley, in 1881. Became a grain merchant and, later, a banker; Vice President, Corn Exchange National Bank(formerly its President); Director of The Northern Trust Company. Has been President of The Chicago Board of Trade; was a Director and the Chairman, Fine Arts Committee of The World's Columbian Exposition; President, The Art Institute of Chicago for more than 25 years; President of The Chicago Orphan Asylum; President, General Conventions of The Universalist Church for four terms; Vice President, The Egyptian Exploration Fund; Treasurer, The University of Chicago; Trustee, The Carnegie Institution; Treasurer, The Auditorium Association; Director, The Presbyterian Hospital; Honorary Member, The American Institute of Architects; Member, Municipal Art League (Treasurer); President, American Federation of the Arts. Treasurer, Sanitary District of Chicago; Member, South Park Commission of Chicago. Clubs: Chicago, Union League, Chicago Athletic, University, Cliff Dwellers, Quadrangle, Commercial, Caxton, Literary. Residence: 2709 Prairie Avenue. Office: Corn Exchange National Bank.

* * *

The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography has two entries on Charles A. Coolidge of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, one early in his career and one posthumous; this is the latter:

"COOLIDGE, Charles Allerton, architect, was born on Boston, MA, November 30, 1858, . . . [F]ollowing his graduation [from Harvard University], [he] took a special course in architecture from The Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He spent a year in the office of Ware & Van Brunt and two years with H. H. Richardson, of Brookline, MA. In 1886, the firm of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge was organized to carry on the work left unfinished at Mr. Richardson's death. His partners were George F. Shepley and Charles H. Rutan, and the firm was in

existence until 1915. In that year, the firm of Coolidge & Shattuck was formed with George C. Shattuck, and, since 1924, Mr. Coolidge has been a member of the firm of Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch & Abbott. Mr. Coolidge has not been limited in his designs to any one type of building. Examples of his work are scattered all over the United States, include buildings for . . . the medical school, Tower group and Harper Memorial Library of The University of Chicago, and the Public Library, Art Institute, Corn Exchange Bank and Harris Trust building in Chicago; . . . In 1899, Mr. Coolidge was appointed American architect of the U. S. commission to the Paris exposition, and, for seven years, he served as Park Commissioner of the City of Boston. . . . He is a member of . . . Chicago Club of Chicago; . . . In politics, he is a Republican; and in religion, an Episcopalian, holding the office of Vestryman in Trinity Church, Boston. . . . He was married in St. Louis, MO, October 30, 1889, to Julia, daughter of John Rutledge Shepley of St. Louis, and they had four children: . . ."

Excerpt from the 1907 edition of Marquis' The Book of Chicagoans, the first edition of what became "Who's Who of Chicago":

SPENCER, Robert Closson, Jr., architect; born in Milwaukee, WI, on April 13, 1864; son of Robert and Ellen (Whiton) Spencer; educated in the public and high schools of Milwaukee; graduated in mechanical engineering at The University of Wisconsin; 8th holder of the Rotch traveling scholarship in architecture (of Boston) in 1891-1893; married in Bath, MN, in 1889 to Ernestine Elliott; children: Marian L., Ernestine M., Charles E. Identified with architectural work in Boston until 1895, when he came to Chicago and, since that time, has practiced architecture in Chicago. Member of The Chicago Architectural Club, Sigma Chi fraternity. Independent in politics. Club: City. Recreations: tennis and hunting. Office: Steinway Hall. Residence: Keystone Avenue, River Forest, IL.

* * *

EXCERPT from Birnbaum & Karson, *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (McGraw Hill, 2000) (pp. 282-285) (without illustrations) - Arleyn Levee's chapter):

OLMSTED, JOHN CHARLES

(1852-1920)

landscape architect, planner

The early life of John Charles Olmsted was filled with extraordinary and

traumatic events that were important in forming his shy personality and his broad-ranging interests. He was born in Vandœuvre, near Geneva, Switzerland, the son of John Hull Olmsted and Mary Cleveland Perkins Olmsted. By the time he was five, John Charles had transversed the Atlantic twice, lost his father to tuberculosis, gained a stepfather in 1859 (his uncle, Frederick Law Olmsted), and settled down to a more orderly life, in a house in the middle of Central Park, then under construction. The cozy stability of this situation was soon interrupted, first by the Civil War, when his stepfather transferred his new family to Washington, DC, in 1862, and, then, by a move to the Mariposa Estate, a frontier gold-mining operation in the foothills of California's Sierra Nevada, which the senior Olmsted managed from 1863 to 1865. Education amid the scenic splendors of Yosemite and the giant sequoias taught John Charles to read the landscape by its flora and fauna, its fossils and minerals. These lessons were reinforced in the Summers of 1869 and 1871, when he returned to the frontier, this time as a member of Clarence King's survey party in Nevada and Utah along the 40th parallel. Here, under often dangerous conditions, he developed his visual memory, to record with speed the topographical, geological and botanical clues of the land, skills that proved invaluable in his later work.

Following his graduation from Yale's Sheffield Scientific School, Olmsted began his professional career as an apprentice in his stepfather's New York office. Early projects included work on the U.S. Capitol grounds and several park and institutional projects. Travel to Europe in 1877- 1878, with concentrated architectural study in London, broadened his vision and further refined his skills. By 1884, with the move of the firm to Brookline, MA, John Charles had become a full partner with his stepfather. The firm, soon, grew to include Henry S. Codman and Charles Eliot, as co- partners. After Frederick Law Olmsted's retirement and the deaths of Codman and Eliot, John Charles and his younger half-brother, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., formed Olmsted Brothers in 1898. John Charles was senior partner until his own death in 1920; the firm continued until 1950.

In addition to his extensive design and planning work, John Charles took responsibility for developing productive office and training procedures, to manage a growing staff and diverse national practice. As one of the trainees, later a friend and collaborator, Arthur Shurcliff, recalled, Olmsted was "a man of few words, fond of detail, . . . [with] a broad grasp of large scale landscape planning" who "carried to completion a

vast amount of work, quietly, with remarkable efficiency." Other apprentices, later colleagues, praised his teaching and thoughtful advice; the admired his ability to resolve complex design problems with artistry and practicality, while enhancing and protecting the natural features of a site. Like his stepfather, Olmsted was committed to the development of landscape art, as a profession, and to the education of communities and clients about the long-term benefits to be gained from careful, comprehensive planning. To this end, he was generous with his time and skills to organizations that sought to extend the influence of sound landscape planning, to beautify burgeoning cities. He was a founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, serving as its first president, and establishing the standards of membership, while being active in other groups such as the American Park & Outdoor Art Association (later, the American Civic Association) and the Association of Park Superintendents, which brought together various professional and civic leaders.

Although Olmsted's published writings are few, his extensive personal correspondence and reports reveal his comprehensive philosophy of design, innovative, yet pragmatic; reflective of the aesthetic tenets of his stepfather, yet responsive to the new social, economic and political demands of 20th century cities. His advice to clients, whether for public, private or institutional projects, was to plan for the future, to acquire as much land as possible, to enable a comprehensive design, protecting scenery and, yet, fulfilling the functional requirements. This advice was critical for municipalities for whom the firm was designing city-shaping park and parkway systems. As Olmsted noted, "The liberal provision of parks in a city is one of the surest manifestations of the . . . degree of civilization and the progressiveness of its citizens. As in the case of almost every complex work composed of varied units, economy, efficiency, symmetry and completeness are likely to be secured when the system, as a whole, is planned comprehensively and the purposes to be accomplished defined, clearly, in advance." Olmsted continued the park planning begun by his stepfather for Boston, Buffalo, Detroit, Rochester, Atlanta, Hartford, Louisville, Brooklyn, Chicago and other cities. He developed park systems for municipalities in diverse locations, including Portland, ME, and Portland, OR, Seattle and Spokane, Dayton and Charleston, and countrywide parks and parkways for Essex County, NJ. In New Orleans and Watertown, NY, he designed individual parks of great originality, on difficult sites. For the small parks in Chicago's densely populated industrial South Side, he turned derelict land parcels

into an imaginative and efficient network of playgrounds, to serve immigrant families.

Park design in cities led to commissions for numerous institutions and subdivisions, often including individual residential work, large and small. Much of the fabric and amenity of cities such as Louisville, Dayton, Seattle and Northwest Washington, DC, results from the extensive planning for residential areas which Olmsted originated, with its associated roads, green spaces, schools and business areas. Comprehensive planning for communities around industrial plants, such as in Depew, NY, and Vandegrift, PA, or around the National Cash Register factory in Dayton, created attractive neighborhoods, instead of bleak tenements. Olmsted's abiding architectural interest was reflected in his residential work, where he took special care to accommodate building to site and vistas, often making preliminary house designs and collaborating, closely, with the residential architect. Likewise, plans for many park structures, particularly in the Boston system, originated with his sketches. Working cooperatively with architects was a major component of his institutional planning for school campuses, sanatoriums, state capitols and civic buildings across the country. His landscape layout provided a remarkably perceptive guide for future building development, retaining some degree of natural beauty in the site. Exposition planning, beginning with his work for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, and continuing with the 1906 Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland, OR, and the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, which shaped The University of Washington Campus in Seattle, continued his architectural collaboration. He terminated the firm's work for the San Diego Exposition of 1915, when he felt that the architectural and business plans violated the landscape integrity of Balboa Park.

For over 40 years, John Charles Olmsted was a respected leader in the landscape and early planning professions, leaving a profound mark on the land, often unrecognized today. The firm's clientele grew to more than 3,500 commissions by the time of his death, many of which he had originated. An indefatigable worker, he was slowed in his last years of practice by the cancer that, eventually, took his life. In his remarkable career, Olmsted bridged the centuries from the vanishing frontier to the 20th century urban realities, leaving a lasting legacy of public and private designs across the country which melded a picturesque aesthetic with pragmatic planning. [The three sources cited relate only to substantial public, not to private, commissions.]

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