

THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

A Journal of Regional Studies

MARIST

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From the Editors

We've looked forward to presenting an issue on the Hudson River Valley's landscape legacy for a long time, both to share information about some of its treasures and to honor those who have dedicated their lives to preserving them. The region holds a unique place in the history of our nation's landscape architecture: it's where the art was first imported from Europe and where it began to evolve—alongside the works of Hudson River School painters and Transcendentalist writers—into something distinctly American. An excerpt from Robert Toole's new book, *Landscape Gardens on the Hudson: A History*, provides a succinct overview of this evolution and its far-reaching impacts. Peter Manning illustrates how these concepts were translated by the Smiley family to create the carriage roads and other popular plein air amenities so popular today in the Shawangunks. Following the further development of the country's outdoor ethic, we republish Benton MacKaye's 1921 call for an Appalachian Trail. Returning to the domestic landscape, Robert Toole also offers an article on Thomas Cole's Cedar Grove, discussing the relationship between painting and landscape architecture at the artist's Catskill home. Thom Johnson's photo essay on Bannerman's Castle presents another legacy, tracing the history and precarious present circumstances of the iconic structures on Pollopel Island. Our History Forum introduces the South Road History Trail, which will serve to connect many important landscapes in Poughkeepsie, and continues with essays on Kykuit and Wilderstein before arriving at the Bard Arboretum, a curatorial landscape architecture project encompassing the grounds of several historic estates on the college campus.

We're especially pleased that this issue coincides with the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area's celebration of landscape architecture at eleven nationally significant sites across our region, the first in a series of events to celebrate and elaborate the Heritage Area's themes of Nature and Culture.

In J. Michael Smith's article in issue 26.2, the Bill of Sale on page 71 includes a transcription error; the name of 1st signer Minsam (carried over from an earlier translation) should be Ninham. On page 75, Figure 1 appears courtesy of the FDR Presidential Library and Museum. In the lower right corner of Figure 3 on page 83, in the South Precinct, the two "Gorelands Patented 1761" tract labels were reversed; the smaller tract is 221 acres, the larger 4,402. Lastly, in Figure 4 on page 89, Ninham the Grandfather's dates were transposed; his correct dates are 1696-1744.



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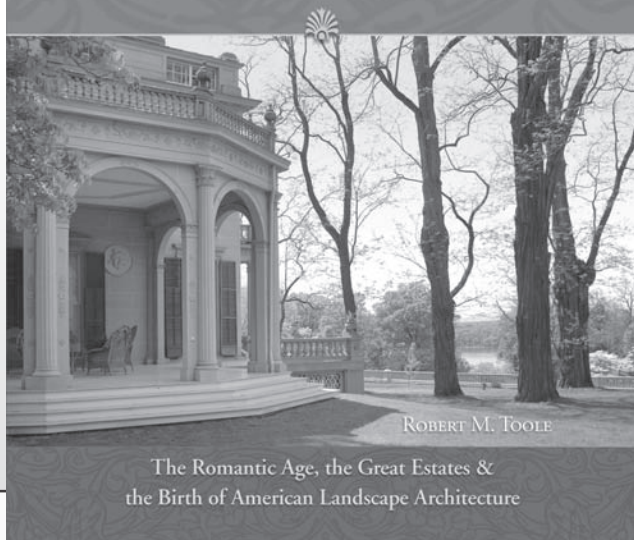
This issue of *The Hudson River Valley Review* is dedicated to

H. TODD BRINCKERHOFF,

founding Chairman of the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College,
whose inspiration and vision not only made HRVI a reality but helped to
develop it into one of the premier regional study centers in the United States.

LANDSCAPE GARDENS

on the HUDSON *a history*



ROBERT M. TOOLE

The Romantic Age, the Great Estates &
the Birth of American Landscape Architecture

Landscape Gardens on the Hudson — a history

**The Romantic Age, the Great Estates &
the Birth of American Landscape Architecture**

Robert M. Toole

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Call for Essays

The Hudson River Valley Review is anxious to consider essays on all aspects of the Hudson Valley—its intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural history, its prehistory, architecture, literature, art, and music—as well as essays on the ideas and ideologies of regionalism itself. All articles in *The Hudson River Valley Review* undergo peer analysis.

Submission of Essays and Other Materials

HRVR prefers that essays and other written materials be submitted as two double-spaced typescripts, generally no more than thirty pages long with endnotes, along with a computer disk with a clear indication of the operating system, the name and version of the word-processing program, and the names of documents on the disk. Illustrations or photographs that are germane to the writing should accompany the hard copy. Otherwise, the submission of visual materials should be cleared with the editors beforehand. Illustrations and photographs are the responsibility of the authors. Scanned photos or digital art must be 300 pixels per inch (or greater) at 8 in. x 10 in. (between 7 and 20 mb). No responsibility is assumed for the loss of materials. An e-mail address should be included whenever possible.

HRVR will accept materials submitted as an e-mail attachment (*hrvi@marist.edu*) once they have been announced and cleared beforehand.

Since HRVR is interdisciplinary in its approach to the region and to regionalism, it will honor the forms of citation appropriate to a particular discipline, provided these are applied consistently and supply full information. Endnotes rather than footnotes are preferred. In matters of style and form, HRVR follows *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Contributors

Mary M. Flad has worked as planning consultant and advisor with historic sites and non-profit organizations throughout the Hudson Valley for three decades, and was a founder of the Maple Grove Restoration Project. She lives in the City of Poughkeepsie.

Thom Johnson is an artist, photographer, educator, and lifetime resident of the Hudson Valley. He is one of the founders of the Bannerman Castle Trust, one of its first tour guides, and coauthor of *Bannerman Castle*. In addition to his ongoing documentation of the castle, he is working on a second book that will present the story of Francis Bannerman VI, the man behind the castle ruins.

Benton MacKaye (March 6, 1879–Dec. 11, 1975) was a forester, planner, and conservationist. A graduate of Harvard University (B.A., 1900; M.A. School of Forestry, 1905), he worked for the U.S. Forest Service, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the U.S. Department of Labor. MacKaye was the author of *The New Exploration: A Philosophy of Regional Planning* and *Expedition Nine: A Return to a Region* as well as the originator of the Appalachian Trail.

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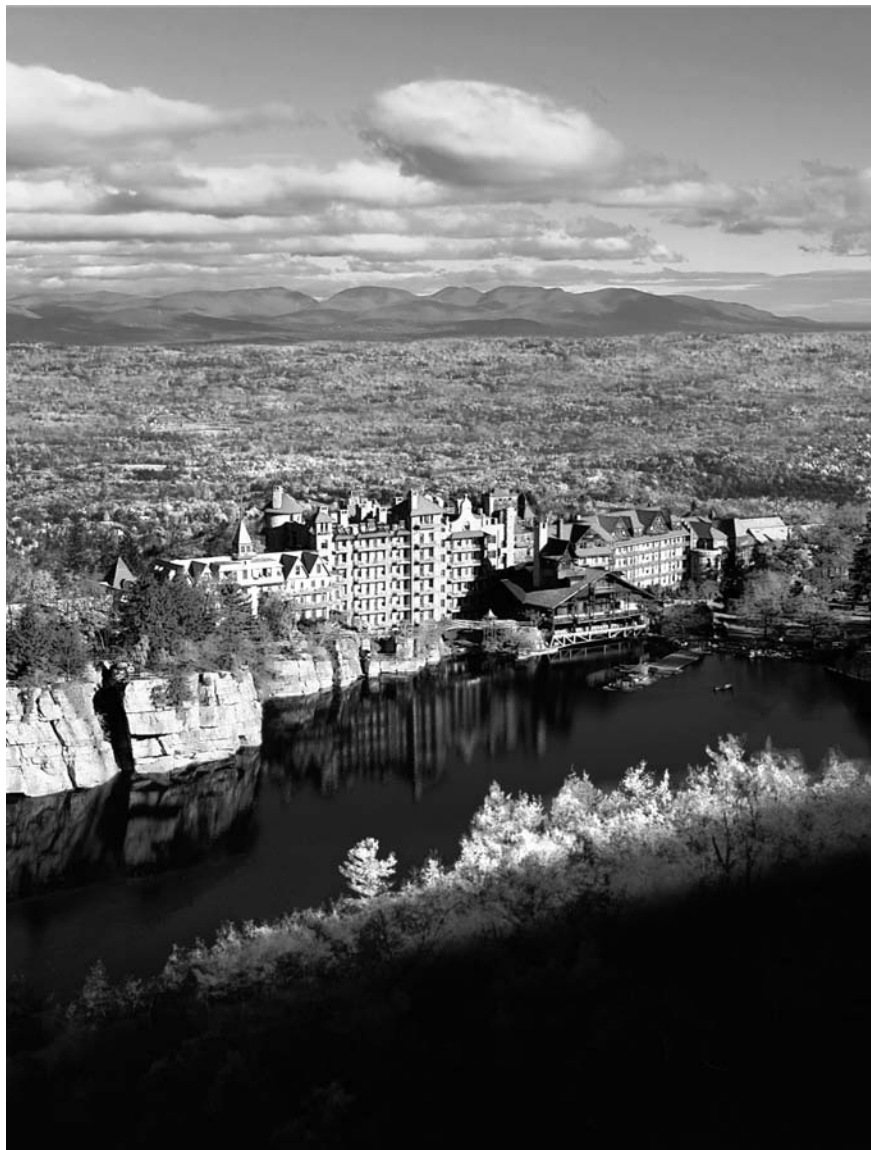
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Springside: Scenic Paths and Gatehouse, 1852

Oil on canvas, 25 ½ x 37 in.

The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York
Promised gift of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Evans, Jr. (Tania Goss, class of 1959)



Mohonk Mountain House, with Lake Mohonk in the foreground
and the Catskills in the distance

Developing the Middle Landscape: The Shawangunk Carriage Roads

Peter Manning

The Shawangunk Mountains, well known for their soaring white cliffs, jewel-like “sky lakes,” and ridgetop pitch pines, offer a unique combination of recreational and educational opportunities that enhance our appreciation and understanding of the natural environment. Large portions of the Shawangunk Ridge have been preserved and public access is facilitated by the extensive network of carriage roads that have been artistically threaded into the landscape. The roads were developed by the Smiley family in association with the Mohonk and Minnewaska estates, founded in 1869 and 1879, respectively. The sensitive design intentions and incredible amounts of labor involved in the creation of these roads are often not realized by those who travel them. In this respect, they are a success. Their design reveals and highlights the beauty of the natural surroundings, blending seamlessly into the landscape. From the fine quality of their craftsmanship to the great vision of their designers, these roads have become an enduring legacy alive with the timeless character of the great mountains through which they traverse.

These roads, many constructed more than a century ago, have remained intact, offering uninterrupted participation in nature to countless visitors. The carriage roads are an intermediate device connecting people with their life-giving environment, both its ancient past and its present beauty. They promote “the kind of recreation which is not merely a form of escapism but a life renewing activity.”¹ In our modern world such places are becoming scarcer and are continually being sought by those seeking the rejuvenating pleasures of the great outdoors. The Shawangunk carriage roads are an outstanding work of landscape design deserving special attention, especially by those involved in the profession. Understanding the success of the carriage roads begins with the story of their creators—the Smileys.

The story of Mohonk begins, fittingly, with a horse and carriage excursion. In September 1869, Alfred H. Smiley and family planned a day’s journey to Paltz

Point (now Sky Top) from their home in Poughkeepsie, some ten miles east of the Shawangunk Ridge. Such outdoor excursions were typical for the Smileys:

When not busy with farming, Alfred delighted in taking his family on long walks and picnics in new places. He knew many interesting facts about nature, acquired over the years of study and teaching. Because of his interesting narrations, family and friends eagerly accompanied Smiley on his walks.²

As the picnic party neared the Shawangunk Mountains, they traveled over a rough road that eventually took them to Lake Mohonk at the base of Paltz Point. As Alfred first glimpsed the waters of Lake Mohonk and the white cliffs surrounding it, his journey became filled with “all the sensation of discovery” and he was overcome by “speechless wonder.”³ From the summit of Paltz Point, the Mohonk landscape became “a prospect for which he could imagine no bounds. He saw in that quick sweep of his eye the whole future of the place unfolding and forming.”⁴ This marks the inception of Alfred Smiley’s vision, a dream that would be realized during the next several decades. Soon after his journey, he summoned his twin brother Albert and informed him that the Lake Mohonk property was for sale. As soon as Albert saw the Mohonk landscape, he too “fell in love with the scenery and felt sure of its development.”⁵

Lake Mohonk and 300 surrounding acres were owned by John Stokes, proprietor of a small tavern on the lake that served alcohol, a practice that went against the Smileys’ Quaker beliefs. Stokes’s attitude toward the landscape contrasted sharply with that of the Smileys, which became evident when he and the twins journeyed to the summit of Paltz Point. Stokes is quoted by Albert as saying, “I suppose the Creator made everything for some use; but what in the world He ever made this pizen laurel for I can’t see. It never grows big enough for firewood, and the cattle won’t eat it.”⁶ Apparently Stokes “talked only of firewood, fodder and area.”⁷ On the other hand, the Smileys were taken by the beauty of the craggy wilderness, and as they ascended the mountain they were struck by the expansive, unfolding view. The magnificent panorama spanned from the Wallkill Valley in the east to the Hudson Highlands in the south, and on to the Rondout Valley, backed by the majestic Catskill Mountains in the west. This fundamental difference in the appreciation of nature between Stokes and the Smileys illustrates how the fate of a landscape often rides a delicate balance, teetering on the value systems placed on it by contemporary, yet markedly different, types of stewards. It also characterizes the paradoxical struggle of the American nation during the nineteenth century. While the hand of progress strove to transform the continent

into a productive landscape of agriculture and industry, a simultaneous current of aesthetic sensibility sought to preserve the disappearing wilderness.

Once Stokes and the Smileys settled on a price and a down payment, the Smileys decided to begin a hotel business to pay the debt.⁸ Alfred would manage the business, while Albert would remain in Providence, Rhode Island, during the winter months teaching at a Quaker school. (The twins communicated extensively throughout the winter; their preserved letters shed much insight into Mohonk's early development.) With this pivotal transfer of land, the Smileys became uniquely positioned to interpret this beautiful setting for the "summer-travelling public." Much of the success of their business depended on the aesthetic experience they offered their well-to-do guests, many of whom were from Philadelphia and New York. This urban clientele sought the peaceful benefits of nature that were absent in the city. They harbored romanticized notions of the country. The Smileys gradually created a landscape that resolved the opposition between wilderness and city, and the carriage roads became the primary medium through which this was accomplished. Through proper design, the roads provided safe and comfortable access to Mohonk's beauty, enabling visitors to enjoy it from the confines of a horse-drawn buggy. They answered the urban curiosity for nature by physically shaping a participatory experience of the landscape. The ongoing development of roads was consistent with the Smileys' belief that nature should be readily accessible to their guests. This invitation to explore the landscape as well as the hospitality of the Smiley brothers helped promote the reputation of Mohonk.

As the popularity of Mohonk grew, Alfred started a new resort business in 1879 at Lake Minnewaska, seven miles to the south. Here he situated Minnewaska Mountain House, later to be known as Cliff House, high above the lake's crystal-blue waters. It commanded spectacular views of the surrounding mountains and countryside. Road building at this new estate continued at a steady pace, enabling easy access to many of the wilder reaches of the Shawangunk Ridge. Carriage travel between the two resorts became a common practice as each locale offered a variety of breathtaking scenery. In 1880, Daniel Smiley, the twins' younger half-brother, assumed partnership with Albert in the Mohonk business. Daniel took charge of Mohonk operations about 1892 and was responsible for a great deal of the present-day Mohonk carriage road system. In 1887, Alfred opened a second mountain house, The Wildmere, at the north end of Lake Minnewaska. The construction of carriage roads at both resorts reached its peak around the turn of the twentieth century; by 1920 most of the present network was in place. On June 1, 1920, the Smileys' feelings toward the Mohonk landscape were expressed in an

address by Daniel Smiley at Mohonk's fiftieth anniversary:

In a very real sense we do not look upon ourselves as irresponsible owners, but as trustees or stewards with the mandate of administering the property for the recreation of visitors equally with ourselves.⁹

Today, in Mohonk's 141st year, this policy continues. The carriage roads and grounds are well-maintained, and in 1963 much of the original estate became part of the Mohonk Trust. Reorganized in 1980 as the Mohonk Preserve, this nonprofit organization has focused on preserving the natural landscape and "giving expression to the Smiley family's humanistic and environmental concerns." The preserve encourages research and education through active participation in the unique natural environment it protects. It maintains twenty-two miles of carriage roads within its nearly 7,000-acre landholding. Smiley Brothers, Inc., presently owns 2,200 acres, including the Mohonk Mountain House and adjacent properties where an additional twenty-two miles of carriage roads are maintained. At Minnewaska, which is owned and managed by New York State as a park, there are about forty miles of carriage roads. The roads are complemented by an extensive network of footpaths that skirt rocky ridgetops, overlook lakes, explore wooded ravines, and penetrate rock crevices. The entire carriage road and trail system is well illustrated in the Shawangunk Trail Maps issued by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

While there is no substitute for a journey along the carriage roads, our appreciation of this landscape is enhanced when we explore their design as an expression of the changing attitudes toward nature during the nineteenth century. In the early part of the century, the Hudson Valley landscape emerged as the cultural hearth where an initial fear of wilderness was gradually offset and redirected toward a deeper appreciation of nature. This appreciation was rooted in the wild character of the American landscape, but it also gained momentum as settlement increased, industry progressed, and wilderness became threatened. The development of Mohonk and Minnewaska certainly reflected these evolving attitudes; it took place as the national parks movement was emerging and the creation of urban parks was in full swing. These influences also contribute to our understanding of the extensive system of carriage roads, which today help protect and manage a regional ecosystem and provide recreational enjoyment for visitors on a grand scale.

A convenient starting point for understanding the shifting American attitudes toward the wilderness is an excerpt from an 1816 address delivered by DeWitt Clinton, governor of New York. The address was given at the opening

ceremonies of the New York-based Academy of Fine Arts.

And can there be a country in the world better calculated than ours to exercise and to exalt the imagination—to call into activity the creative powers of the mind, and to afford just views of the beautiful, the wonderful, and the sublime? Here Nature has conducted her operations on a magnificent scale: extensive and elevated mountains—lakes of oceanic size—rivers of prodigious magnitude—cataracts unequalled for volume of water—and boundless forests filled with wild beasts and savage men, and covered with the towering oak and the aspiring pine.

This wild, romantic, and awful scenery is calculated to produce a correspondent impression in the imagination—to elevate all the faculties of the mind, and to exalt all the feelings of the heart. But when cultivation has exerted its powers—when the forest is converted into fertile fields, blooming with beauty and smiling with plenty, then the mind of the artist derives a correspondent color from the scenes with which he is conversant: and the sublime, the wonderful, the ornamental and the beautiful thus become, in turn, familiar to his imagination.¹⁰

In 1816, the United States was a young nation, politically freed but still in search of a cultural identity. The vast, unexplored wilderness would help form that identity as it became linked with national pride. The appeal to the imagination, as advocated in this address, would soon be answered by a variety of American romantics.

In 1819, author Washington Irving created the character of Rip Van Winkle and cleverly grabbed the imagination of the American public. Many soon found themselves wanting to be like Rip Van Winkle, scampering up the Catskills' wild ravines. Their desire for an escape could be answered by the mountains that loomed majestically before them, stirring their curiosity and instilling a sense of prospective adventure. Whether or not this adventure involved a game of nine pins, as in the story, it had the potential to include an element of timelessness, transcending the common life in the valley. As the public sought a drink from Rip's famed flagon, shrewd businessmen took advantage of the increasing attention and migration to the Catskills.

Four years after the appearance of "Rip Van Winkle," the first in a series of mountain houses was being built in the Catskills. The Catskill Mountain House was perched high above the Hudson River on the eastern flank of the Catskills, and this location became a prime method of advertisement. Visitors to the new hotel found themselves next to North and South Lakes and within close prox-

imity to the spectacular falls on the Kaaterskill. The location was lauded by many, including DeWitt Clinton, who remarked on its scenery in his diary. He compared scenes of the Catskills with those of Europe and “indulged in a long reverie in which bears, wolves, wildcats, buffalo, and grizzly bears were mingled.”¹¹ The references to wild animals were most likely influenced by *The Pioneers*, an 1823 novel by James Fenimore Cooper. In the same manner as “Rip Van Winkle,” this story establishes a foothold in reality through the medium of landscape. The reader is lured into a fictional web woven by symbolic characters whose attitudes toward the wilderness are highly representational of the conflicting American situation. Cooper introduces Natty Bumppo, who appreciates wilderness beauty, which he sees as a blessing of God. Although Natty is pushed farther into the woods by the wave of progress, he does not retreat without capturing the heart of the reader. With four additional “Leatherstocking Tales” appearing by 1841, Natty Bumppo became a uniquely American folk hero who helped influence the American perception of wilderness by instilling it with a moral and aesthetic sense of worth. Like Rip before him, but to a much greater extent, Natty showed the public that the American wilderness was not only romantic and awesome, but something to be respected and explored.

As the imaginary leap of Rip Van Winkle became one step more real with Natty Bumppo, the American public became further primed for a direct experience of nature. This closer relationship was encouraged earlier by Irving when he said that “he...who would study nature in its wildness, and variety must plunge into the forest, must explore the glen, must stem the torrent and dare the precipice.”¹² And the concept of God in nature, present in the works of the English poets, was finding its way into American thought. William Cullen Bryant was among the first of the American poets to promote the holiness of nature. “A plunge into the forest” was quickly becoming a spiritual invitation. In the early 1820s, a young Thomas Cole accepted this invitation and began interpreting what he saw with his paintbrush. In 1825, Cole made his first trip up the Hudson River and soon after composed paintings that caught the attention of highly acclaimed members of the New York art community. Unlike the usual practice of painting the distant landscape from a comfortable position, Cole journeyed into the wilderness to sketch numerous scenes from dynamic viewpoints. He transformed his sketches into colorful paintings that delivered the viewer into nature, capturing the essence of a particular spot and conveying the excitement of being there. He enlivened the writings of Irving and Cooper by sketching scenes from “Rip Van Winkle” and painting a scene from *The Last of the Mohicans*. Cole was becoming an American pioneer, not just through his skill with a paintbrush and

his frequent experiences of nature, but in his writing. In his “Essay on American Scenery,” he wrote that the associations within the wilderness “are of God the creator—they are his undefiled works, and the mind is cast into the contemplation of eternal things.”¹³ Cole believed “it is of greatest importance for the painter always to have his mind upon Nature, as the star by which he is to steer to excellence in his art.”¹⁴ Like Cooper, Cole was concerned with the beauty of the American wilderness, but also with the effects of progress on that beauty. He incorporated various aspects of progress in many of his paintings, including the symbolic devices of tree stumps and railroads.

As painters of what was later to be known as the Hudson River School were exploring and recording the works of the Creator, the Transcendentalists, a philosophical group of writers in New England, were promoting a spiritual connection between man and God through nature. These men, most notably Ralph Waldo Emerson, described how the human soul was positioned between physical reality and universal truth. Nature became the house of worship and the vehicle enabling man’s soul to transcend its earthly presence through a spiritual meditation with God, which, in turn, enhanced the meaning of his own physical existence. To achieve transcendence, it was necessary to remove oneself from societal routines and submerge the inner being in the wilderness. Taking this advice to heart was Henry David Thoreau, who made his famous retreat to Walden Pond outside of Concord, Massachusetts, in 1845.

A year later, Thoreau’s journey to the desolate northern woods of Maine evoked darker moods. In *Wilderness and the American Mind*, Roderick Nash describes how “the wilderness of Maine shocked Thoreau,” and how Thoreau himself uses such terms as “grim and wild” and “savage and dreary” to describe his feeling of being “more lone than you can imagine.” The significance of this journey was that “instead of coming out of the woods with a deepened appreciation of the wilds, Thoreau felt a greater respect for civilization and realized the necessity of balance,”¹⁵ what Nash describes as a “combination of the good inherent in wilderness with the benefits of cultural refinement.”¹⁶ This state of equilibrium would exist as both physical place and mental construct. As place, this “middle landscape” would be located somewhere between the inner city and the desolate wilderness. In the mind, this counterpoise was both a dream of Arcadia dancing in the imagination and an achievable goal fixed in practical thought.

In many ways the writers, poets, and painters of the mid-nineteenth century hinted at this balanced situation through their own mediums. In 1850, Cooper remarked that the Leatherstocking represented “the better qualities of both conditions [civilization and savage life] without pushing either to extremes.”¹⁷ Many

painters of the time created various combinations of civilization and wilderness, technology and pastoralism, with George Inness's *The Lackawanna Valley* being one of the more richly symbolic examples. Inevitably, this union of civilization and wilderness would be resolved in the landscape, and the idea that it could be steered by proper design was rapidly becoming popular.

Landscape Gardening

By the mid-nineteenth century, the practice of landscape gardening in America was elevated to the status of an art form. Designing one's landscape was both an act of individual creativity and an expression of cultural identity. In essence, a landscape gardener, like a poet, writer, painter, or transcendentalist is communicating an experience of nature.

The foremost works of art that influenced landscape gardeners were paintings. Landscapes, like paintings, were based on principles of aesthetic theory which, once properly embodied in a composition, would serve as a "correct" example of art for the observer. Although the connection between landscape gardening and painting was expressed in America, it was rooted in the writings on aesthetic theory of eighteenth-century England and the related English School of landscape gardening. By studying paintings, or more precisely the principles of painting, the landscape gardener could develop the proper "taste" and become better equipped to "improve" the landscape. Two primary concepts, the *Beautiful* and the *Picturesque*, both derived from paintings, informed the practice of English landscape gardening. "Beautiful" landscapes were polished and marked primarily by smooth, flowing, curvilinear lines and shapes; the Picturesque was more random and chaotic, characterized by irregularity, deformity, and the ruggedness of nature itself.

Since many of the Picturesque principles were based on the existing qualities of nature, they would be pertinent in America, where cultural identity was being established within a wilderness setting. Unlike much of the English countryside, which promoted a refined feeling of idyllic pastoralism, America's expansive wilderness was a catalyst for exploration and adventure. The wilderness was a common denominator to all Americans, and if taste was to be a factor in its development, then taste had more of a democratic potential than in England, where it tended to foster a separation within society. Still, a taste for landscape gardening in America had to be cultivated. Although many significant examples of landscape design were present in America by 1840, they were relatively unknown to the general public. This absence of attention would change almost overnight with the landmark writings of Andrew Jackson Downing.

With the publication of his *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America* in 1841, Downing placed landscape gardening at the forefront of the American consciousness. Recognizing that the rapidly developing enthusiasm of nature was unfolding on the landscape, he skillfully guided it with his aesthetic sensibility and expertise on the subject. He felt a responsibility toward the nation and gave new meaning to “taste” by developing its public potential in a manner that was both romantic and practical. The principles of landscape gardening could “be studied with advantage, even by him who has only three trees to plant for ornament; and we hope no one will think his grounds too small, to feel willing to add something to the general amount of beauty in the country.”¹⁸

Downing reinforced the distinctions between the Beautiful and the Picturesque (see image and caption, page 2) and noted that the Picturesque was becoming the preferred mode of expression in the American landscape. Since the existing character of place was quite prominent in much of the landscape, the Picturesque effect could be conveniently achieved in an economical manner with “so little art.” Downing advised citizens moving to the country to choose naturally wooded sites “which seem absolutely to court the finishing touches of the rural artist. Place a dwelling in such a site and it appropriates all nature’s handiwork to itself in a moment.”¹⁹

Downing always emphasized how crucial it was for the landscape gardener to have a deep understanding of the spirit of a place before undertaking improvements. Exemplary landscapes were cited by Downing to convey instances in which this relationship was convincingly exhibited through design. In particular, he lauded the estates along the Hudson for their masterly embodiment of design principles and encouraged his readers to “examine, personally,” these landscapes. To do so would be “far more convincing and instructive to most minds, than lessons taught in any other mode whatever.”²⁰

With his writing, Downing was encouraging the reader to experience the landscape firsthand, to spend a portion of one’s time outside, to take a journey. We admire Downing’s writing for its inspiring descriptions of his experiences, which prompted readers to have their own. For the landscape gardener, journeys become a way of life, rituals supplying a source for design. These journeys helped bridge the gap between theory and practice by enriching the design process. By visiting landscapes described by Downing, the landscape gardener’s ability to make design judgments is expanded. The landscape gardener aims not to mimic these designs but to develop his “own original powers to seize the subtle essence, the half disclosed idea involved in the finest portions of nature.”²¹ Instruction

comes through individual perception, igniting creativity, but it is grounded in the more universal experience of nature. The experiential landscape is the instructive medium that breathes life into theory. By submersing ourselves in nature, whether it is a designed rural landscape or the wilderness, we improve our interpretive skills. We recognize the inherent design in nature and realize that we, too, are a part of this grand scheme. Through this realization, we understand that our design of the landscape is not an intrusion, but a natural process emerging from the earth. This enables us to become more conversant in the various means of design communication and allows us to establish a greater appreciation of our connection with nature in the various situations that are presented. The “art” becomes the passing on of an experience. By becoming “one” with the landscape, we understand not how we design it, but how it designs us.

The Middle Landscape

The Shawangunk carriage roads can be considered a prime answer to Downing’s call “for a counterpoise to the great tendency towards constant change,”²² as they considerably expanded on many of Downing’s principles and elevated them to regional proportions. As public access to Mohonk was facilitated by the extension of the Wallkill Valley Railroad and the Mountain House was enlarged, the carriage road network expanded further into the mountains. And it is the sensitive design techniques employed by the Smileys that express the balance, experiential depth, and richness that characterize an ideal middle landscape. In many ways, the Shawangunks are an excellent example of the Picturesque middle landscape. Owing partly to the craggy nature of the terrain with its rugged appearance and irregular forms, it is also largely due to the fact that the primary designed object in the landscape is also the means of experience—the carriage road. The carriage roads provide the means for a constant unfolding of scenery, refreshing the eye and piquing the imagination. According to William Gilpin, an early aesthete on the Picturesque, “The first source of amusement to the Picturesque traveller is the pursuit of his object and searching after effects. This is the general intention of picturesque travel.”²³

The Shawangunk carriage roads are the medium for an amusing pursuit that reveals the natural environment while maintaining our connection to it. The *road* is an ideal integration of process and product and of time and space, as the journey and its changing course of events become unified within an ongoing experience of nature. The traveler quickly becomes immersed in nature since there is no requirement of deciphering the design. The traveler need not be a connoisseur of art but bring only his inherent capacity to experience beauty. A graceful curve in

a road might be considered an object of beauty threaded through the forest, but more importantly it is a segment of the traveler's experience.

As the urban interest in nature steadily increased in the decades following the Civil War, several hotel resorts sprang up in the Catskills, many of them boasting tremendous guest capacities. Despite the grand proportions of these resorts, they failed to offer the integrated experience of nature found in the rapidly growing network of Shawangunk carriage roads. The Smileys, unlike owners of many other resorts, deliberately created a diversion from the normal activities that occurred in the city. They did not serve alcohol or allow gambling and tailored the experience of their guests to be in direct contact with nature, reflecting their Quaker upbringing. By combining the intimacy of secluded carriage drives with the capacity of a large mountain house, they created a balanced experience that remains unique.

Conservation

The expansion of the carriage road system also enabled the Smileys to manage the forest and draw wood for furniture, bridges, fences, and heating. Although many wood-harvesting activities took place in the off-season, the Smileys did not hesitate to explain to their summer guests the benefits of both aesthetic and scientific forest activities on the property. According to Daniel Smiley (1907–1989), grandson of Daniel Smiley, “Mohonk forestry goes back almost to the beginning of scientific forest management in the United States.”²⁴ The era of Daniel Smiley's management, roughly 1880 to 1930, was a period of tremendous growth, and he was instrumental in carefully leading the expansion of the road system and of the Mountain House. As the concept and location of the middle landscape in America underwent a shift, Mohonk became a place where a balanced condition was fixed and sustained. In the 1920s, when the automobile began to change the face of the American landscape, Daniel Smiley banned its use because it threatened to disrupt Mohonk's peaceful setting. This marks an important point in the history of Mohonk since many state and national parks were being designed to accommodate the automobile. It was not that the car was totally destructive to the wilderness—certainly this invention made the landscape more accessible—but it was slowly changing the design of the landscape, and more importantly, the American relationship with nature. Today, Mohonk allows limited automobile traffic to and from the Mountain House, while the secluded character of the carriage roads has been preserved.

Landscape gardening was a way of life for Daniel, who combined the practical skill of an engineer with the taste of an artist in his passion for improving

the Mohonk landscape. He explored it on horseback, planning the carriage road system and supervising its construction. As Larry Burgess relates:

To keep a balance in life, he devoted much time to landscape gardening and the development of a subtle blend between natural scenery and the need to serve recreational purposes. As a result of these interests, he assembled an extensive and rare library on landscape gardening, forestry, and related subjects. This splendid collection guided the visual beauties of Mohonk which many visitors and guests credited to nature alone.²⁵

As Mohonk became increasingly popular for its labyrinth of paths and carriage roads, guests and visitors soon realized that fully exploring this landscape would require more than a day's journey. The prospect of untraveled carriage roads undoubtedly left a yearning for continuing one's quest for the Picturesque. The creation of more carriage roads contributed to the insatiable thirst for adventure and the ongoing pursuit of resolving curiosity. Building more roads reduced the effect of having a limited number of arteries for travel that seem like extensions of civilization into a wild territory.

By threading a finely knit system of roads into the landscape, the Smileys explored the intricacies of the Shawangunks, realizing the full potential of design. This expansion heightened the idea of the middle landscape to the point where it began to lose its designation as "middle" and assume a life of its own, becoming more of a center. For the traveler, Mohonk would begin to feel more like a separate place as he or she became continually suspended in the Picturesque experience, losing contact with the bustle of the Mountain House without being swallowed by the wilderness. Since navigation was left to the driver, this would allow time for reflection and ensure a safe journey; however, traveling alone on foot was a common activity of the more adventuresome. In either case, the fascination of getting lost for a better part of the day was characteristic of Picturesque pleasure. From the early years of road and trail development, the Smileys and their work crew understood this fascination. Through their design work, they have ensured that travelers can experience it for generations to come.

Design Features of the Carriage Roads

The design of the carriage roads can be understood as a tasteful compromise between adjusting to the natural features of the locality and creating a pleasurable traveling experience. These features physically shaped the configuration of roads and influenced aesthetic decisions. Although the Shawangunk environment is highly diverse and varies considerably within short distances, it is possible to

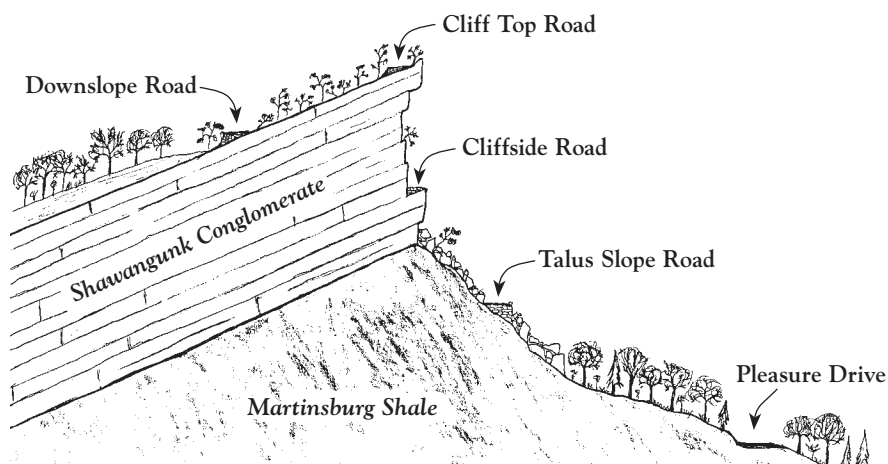


Figure 1: Carriage Road Typology, adapted from Snyder

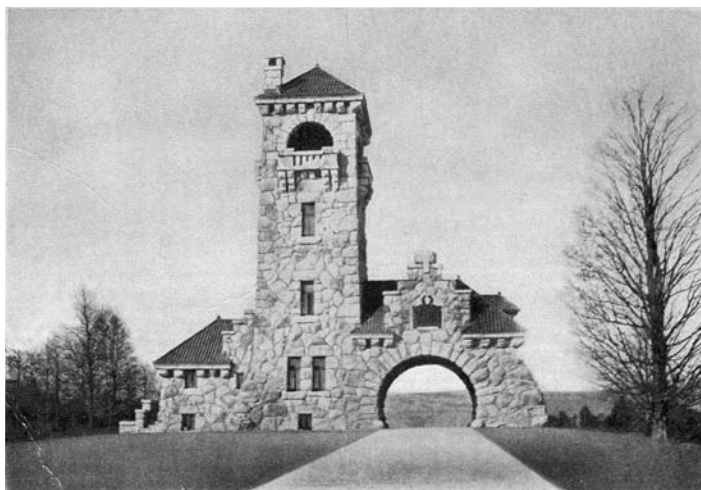
isolate the prominent natural features of the mountains and develop an associated typology of roads. Figure 1 reveals five carriage-road types and provides prominent examples of each. Table 1 explores the contextual elements and construction considerations that shape and complement road design, tailoring it toward an aesthetic traveling experience.

When examining the important influence of topography on carriage-road design, it's important to note how varying combinations of grades and curves, serving both aesthetic and functional purposes, were skillfully blended into the landscape. Whenever possible, the existing terrain was preserved in order to minimize labor and construction costs and to preserve the existing character of place. It is no coincidence that many of the carriage roads either follow a consistent line of elevation or ascend and descend gradually. Level or near-level gradients facilitated the road-building process, made the traveling experience more pleasurable, and allowed the horses to travel with less difficulty. In addition to gradual gradients, the carriages needed a sufficient turning radius; and this meant including more sweeping curves in the roads' design. These curves provided a constant unfolding of scenery while continually changing the carriage traveler's point of view.

In addition to the five types of roads, the *Approach Road* is treated as a special category. The Smileys were constantly improving on the original roads they traveled over during their first visits to Paltz Point. The approach to the hotel was very important in creating a first impression for visitors and setting the tone for one's vacation. Alfred's letters to his brother reveal the meticulous attention given to the design of the approach road from the Wallkill Valley to the Mountain House. It underwent a series of re-routings. Eventually the Stage Road begun in 1902

Table 5.1
Description of Carriage Road Types

<i>Road Types</i>	<i>Natural Landscape Examples</i>	<i>Aesthetic Features</i>	<i>Features</i>	<i>Construction Issues</i>
Pleasure Drive	Oakwood Drive Cedar Drive Bonticou Road	Many ravines Mature hardwood forests	Near-level gradient Curvature: lengthening of journey, continual reorientation of view	Cut-and-fill method commonly used Many culverts, bridges, and roadside ditches installed for stream crossings and drainage
Clifftop Road	Upper Castle Point Road Upper Hamilton Point Road Sky Top Road Eagle Cliff Road Shale Slopes	Thin soils Conglomerate often exposed Low, sparse vegetation (commonly pitch pine, Scrub oak, low blueberry) Mixed forest (hardwoods and pitch pine, etc.) Conglomerate exposed along upper portions Occasional vista cuts	Pronounced curvature (switchbacks and road following cliff line): lengthening of journey, continual reorientation of view Many distant views, but also vista cuts	Blasting often necessary Shale transporting for road surfacing (presently, shale has eroded along Upper Castle and Hamilton resulting in sections of exposed conglomerate) Many switchbacks required Drainage: mostly surface (waterbreaks, roadside ditches)
Talus Slope Road	Undercliff Road Humpty Dumpty Road Forest Drive	Shale-conglomerate "contact zone" Sloping topography Huge conglomerate boulders Mixed forest (pitch pine more common along Humpty Dumpty, hardwoods along Upper Forest)	Distant views: vista cuts and open views "Picturesque" talus and crags Gentle gradient (Undercliff) Undulating gradient (Humpty Dumpty)	Blasting common Extensive moving of rock Many supporting walls Road curvature often impractical Surface drainage common: complemented by raised subbase
Cliffside Road	Lower Hamilton Point Road Castle Point Road (Battlement Terrace) Awosting Road (Litchfield Ledge)	Cliffs above and below road Wooded ravines also below road	Excitement of traveling through such an environment Numerous overlooks	Blasting often necessary Extensive supporting structures Drainage: natural and through constructed subbase
Downslope Road	Overcliff Road (straight section) Trapps Road (section paralleling Near Trapps)	Inclined slopes of conglomerate often exposed Mixed forest (hardwoods and pitch pine, etc.)	Distant views (especially Overcliff) Gentle gradient Extended line of sight along road	Minimal blasting Extensive supporting structures Drainage: culverts, waterbreaks, and natural-subject to erosion Road curvature impractical



COURTESY HUDSON RIVER VALLEY HERITAGE

Testimonial Gateway, from an historic postcard

would emerge as the primary route. Although it is no longer used, this road is known as Lenape Lane for part of its course, and it passes under the Testimonial Gateway, which is now a private residence. Made of Shawangunk conglomerate and dedicated in 1908, this gateway was erected to commemorate the fiftieth wedding anniversary of Albert and Eliza Smiley and to mark the entrance to the Mohonk estate. West of the gateway, the road exhibits notable design features that mark its prominence as the primary approach to the mountain. These features include a broader width, an allee of pin oaks, and a separation of grade with Butternut Road, a public road open to automobile traffic.

This separation of grades reflects the Smileys' concern for creating a continuous traveling experience, and it is an important technique of landscape designers. Albert expressed his plans for this road at the groundbreaking ceremony for the gateway, one year prior to the dedication. His words reveal how each grade separation becomes a crucial link that supports the entire system.

The building of roads, making all parts of the estate accessible also affords me great pleasure. We have already more than fifty miles and we plan to construct a very beautiful one from the new gateway to the hotel, following for more than a mile the course of a charming brook. In order to make our private roads continuous we already have five bridges over the public road and extensions now planned will make it necessary to build two more. The estate is continuous, adjoining Minnewaska property on one end and reaching seven miles to a point far beyond Guyot's Hill. We have tried to make every part of it available for the enjoyment of our guests and friends.²⁶



PHOTO BY FRANK TKAC, COURTESY OF MOHONK PRESERVE

View of the Trapps from Old Minnewaska Carriage Road, Mohonk Preserve



PHOTO BY FRANK TKAC, COURTESY OF MOHONK PRESERVE

Hikers on Overcliff Carriage Road, Mohonk Preserve



PHOTO BY FRANK TKAC, COURTESY OF MOHONK PRESERVE

Undercliff Carriage Road, Mohonk Preserve



PHOTO BY FRANK TKAC, COURTESY OF MOHONK PRESERVE

Undercliff Carriage Road, Mohonk Preserve

Although some of the overpasses are no longer active, the Trapps Bridge (passing over US 44/55) and the bridge over Mountain Rest Road are absolutely critical in retaining the continuity of the entire (Mohonk-Minnewaska) carriage road system.

In addition to the physical design of the approach road, the Smileys were constantly extending their hospitality and looking for ways to create a more seamless approach for their guests.

Prospects, Gazebos, and Vista Cuts

On that September day in 1869, it was the distant promontory of Paltz Point that guided Alfred Smiley and family to their destination. Soon, the prospect from this point helped convince Alfred and Albert of the property's development potential. The term "prospect" appears frequently in the picturesque travel literature of eighteenth-century England and was considered a highly desirable feature to encounter in the landscape. A prospect is an unobstructed view of the distant landscape, also called a bird's-eye view and often extending 360 degrees. The prospect tower or high point, being above the individual picturesque scenes, was often viewed by the traveler during a journey, serving as a beacon and suggesting an appealing destination. Once reached, the traveler could look back upon the places



JIM SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

A.K. Smiley Memorial Tower, Paltz Point

he had traveled, all of which became united within this one encompassing view. Prospects and their potential were quickly recognized by the Smileys. All three mountain houses, for instance, were sited so that they would overlook the lake on one side while creating excellent prospects on the other. And numerous other promontories, such as Eagle Cliff and Castle Point, were eventually woven into the carriage road system. But Paltz Point, renamed Sky Top in the Indian tradition, was the first to be developed and it always has remained the most popular.

Traveling connections between the Mountain House and Sky Top received special attention since accessibility to the summit and its views would increase Mohonk's popularity. In early 1871, Alfred explored possible routes for a road to the summit and then wrote to his brother, including a sketch of a proposed road with notes on gradients, blasting, and a switchback. This road was quickly constructed and then improved over the next several years, until it was rebuilt in 1881. It was hailed as one of the most beautifully engineered roads of its time, with graceful curves swirling about the summit, constantly reorienting the viewer's perspective and celebrating the many distant views. As one reviewer expressed in 1901:

It is doubtful if anywhere in America there is any example so nearly approaching the superb road construction of Switzerland, or anywhere a more extensive and satisfactory view of valley and mountain.²⁷

Alfred's letters also reveal the importance of roads as fire breaks, citing an instance in which "the whole of Sky Top would have burnt over"²⁸ had it not been for an old wood road. Roads not only served to transport water, but the switchbacks and curves contributed to a road pattern that is almost parallel at points, reinforcing firefighting efforts. In these ways, the carriage roads protect what they were built to explore. There are two reservoirs along the carriage road to Sky Top, one the result of stone quarried for the construction of the A.K. Smiley Memorial Tower (1923). This irregularly shaped reservoir is also a reflection pool for the tower, which itself served for decades as an observatory for fire rangers.

Today, the A.K. Smiley Memorial Tower is one of the most well-known landmarks in the Mid-Hudson Region; on a clear day, it can be seen from miles around. This tower is the fourth observation structure to occupy this location. The evolution of these towers provides insight into the design and development of the Mohonk landscape. The first structure was erected only two months after Albert purchased the original property. In an early letter to his brother, Alfred describes how careful positioning of this observatory and the cutting of trees enables the structure to be seen from the Mountain House. This passage is one of



JIM SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

Thuston Rock Summer House overlooking Shawangunk Ridge

the earliest references to creating a viewshed at Mohonk—a technique of landscape gardening that would be used extensively along the carriage roads. Prior to the construction of the present-day A.K. Smiley Memorial Tower, a trial structure was placed at the location. It was carefully viewed from several distant vantage points, including the Testimonial Gateway, before the final position was secured. The view of the Mountain House from Sky Top was to become one of the most significant in Mohonk's history. It was photographed frequently for advertising and appears in the old Mountain House letterhead. As this view was kept open over the years, it revealed the architectural developments of the Mountain House. With the blue Catskills as a backdrop, the hotel slowly grew into its current, eclectic design. This view was reciprocal: as guests gazed up at the tower, it became an invitation to journey to the summit. As the carriage roads were developed, Sky Top became visible from numerous distant locations within the carriage road system. Many of these points were enhanced through vista-cutting and marked with gazebos.

Gazebos

For anyone who has visited Mohonk, rustic gazebos are a familiar sight throughout the landscape. Also known as summer houses, or covered seats, there were 157 of these structures on the Mohonk property in 1917.²⁹ At Minnewaska, as many as 170 were said to exist.³⁰

Gazebos also occupy the middle landscape and are pivotal structures in the traveler's experience. They can be thought of as extensions of the Mountain House, satellites of the porch nestled in the woods. In form, they evoke an architectural feel, while the materials themselves have been gathered from the woods and left in their raw state. In this sense, their design connects nature and architecture through art. Their placement along roads, often at the cliff's edge, connects the safe and familiar terrain of the road with the wilder lands beyond, and their provision of seating and shelter invites a pause in one's journey. Gazebos are excellent examples of the landscape dialectics of *inside-outside*, *prospect-refuge*, and *protected-exposed*.³¹



Lakeside Gazebo

Like the profusion of roads in the landscape, the large number of gazebos expands the possibilities of adventure while simultaneously providing for a greater capacity of guests.

The craft of gazebo construction would become a long-standing tradition at Mohonk, and this art form was passed along only after a period of apprenticeship. The continuance of tradition at Mohonk was and continues to be a key to the business's success. The attention to detail found in the rustic furniture, gazebos, and bridges is very much influenced through the owners' appreciation of the surrounding landscape and the ability to communicate this feel to visitors. In describing how transfer of management was passed from Albert to Daniel Smiley, Larry Burgess reminds us how journeys on the property were an integral component of the landscape design process.

"The walks turned out to be more than pleasant interludes. Albert was testing Daniel to see whether his younger brother had the taste to lay out a road or spot a scenic view."³²

Over the years, the diverse architecture of gazebos has been the result of many influences. An assortment of images, including many from Japanese and English sources, exists in the libraries at Mohonk. In the 1920s and 1930s, “Summerhouse Contests” were held.³³ One double-story summer house in the Mohonk Gardens was modeled directly after a drawing in Downing’s *Treatise*. Today, the tasks of gazebo construction and repair remain in the hands of Mohonk Preserve and Mountain House staffs, with the Mohonk Barn Museum serving as the primary workshop.

In the Shawangunks, the abundance of interesting spots, coupled with the extensive miles of carriage roads and paths, opened up countless possibilities for locating gazebos. While some are precariously perched on outcrops in the vicinity of crevices and talus slopes, others are nestled in the quieter recesses of Mohonk paths. Lakefront locations at both resorts, especially in the past, saw the greatest concentration of gazebos. The profusion of these structures within close proximity of the Mountain Houses “carried” the architecture into the landscape, enticing the traveler to become closer to nature. The most common location of gazebos along the carriage roads are the cliffside spots offering distant views. Like the prospect tower, their location combines many benefits. As Downing relates:

If there are certain points from which are obtained agreeable prospects or extensive views of the surrounding country, a seat by designating those points and by affording us a convenient mode of enjoying them, has a double recommendation to our minds.³⁴



Two-story gazebo in the garden of the Mohonk Mountain House



Mohonk Mountain House, Lake Mohonk, and Paltz Point

Vistas

I have treated this property, the result of seventy-six purchases, as a landscape artist does his canvas, only my canvas covers seven square acres.

—Albert K. Smiley, 1907³⁵

Vistas or vista cuts are one of the closest connections between painting and landscape gardening. Like a landscape painter, the landscape gardener works with the principles of light, shade, depth, framing, and unity of composition to create a pleasing, framed scene. Vista cuts along the carriage roads are a significant component of “aesthetic forestry” practiced by the Smileys. In the earlier years of Mohonk, trees were planted to help create vistas, as Albert suggested, “to give seclusion to a too open view.”³⁶ Over the years, though, the many picturesque views were formed and maintained by the removal of trees. This was a delicate process, involving careful attention. Unlike on the painter’s canvas, mistakes are not easily rectified.

Picturesque views were integral to the sequence of the traveling experience as well as for the advertising of Mohonk. With the availability of historical images of views and the knowledge of experienced crews, the traditional art of vista-cutting was carried out. Considered a “sacred duty,”³⁷ vista-cutting involves an interactive process. While one person stands at the observation point, others occupy positions in the viewshed and shake individual trees or limbs. The observer calls out

which trees are to be removed and which are to be saved. This duty respects the traditional concerns of the Smileys by maintaining the vistas, and it engages the participants in an active design process. By working both sides of a vista, part of the exchange associated with the experience of place can be visually adjusted by the designers, who strike a balance between the traveler's aesthetic point of view and the natural composition of the site.

Reconstruction

The quality of construction in the carriage roads is superb as evidenced by their longevity and relatively low maintenance required. Undercliff Road, for instance, is an exceptionally well-crafted example of road building. In addition to the heightened engineering skill of the Smileys, most of the special care exhibited in such projects can be attributed to the stoneworkers who lived in the Shawangunk region. The presence of an indigenous stonecutting industry greatly influenced the skills of this local labor force, while benefiting the Smileys and greatly enhancing the quality of road construction.

An awareness of the various construction processes contributes to a deeper appreciation of the roads by giving a sense of how the existing environment was reworked and given new expression. The various built features of the roads—the bridges, supporting walls, altered rock outcrops—become touch-



PHOTO COURTESY MOHONK MOUNTAIN HOUSE ARCHIVES

Widening of Garden Road



Construction of Undercliff Road

stones connecting us with another time. This was a time when work crews, without bulldozers and backhoes, slowly transformed rocky mountainsides into expertly graded roadbeds. A visit to the Mohonk Barn Museum assists one's journey into this past, as a variety of hand tools and horse-drawn equipment, although resting peacefully, helps bring to life the days of road building. Further investigation at the Preserve's Daniel Smiley Research Center and the Mountain House archives, reveals

site-specific images that give a sense of what might be accomplished in a single day. Imagining these bygone times, we begin to realize the magnitude of the road-building process and we develop a respect for those who put long years of hard manual labor into the construction of what is now a regional system of preserved carriage roads. These road builders not only paved the way for wealthy carriage travelers in search of pleasing vistas, but they physically built a legacy that has been inherited by succeeding generations.

As travelers of today delve into this past, we might wonder what it was like to work on a Shawangunk road crew. While we cannot experience the exact feeling of working day in and day out, wielding heavy tools and using horse-drawn equipment, we can develop an appreciation for the intensity of the construction process. In a similar way, these turn-of-the-century road crews might have wondered who would be traveling these roads in the future. While they probably did not imagine a bustling Undercliff Road awash with brightly clad mountain climbers, bikers, and hikers some 100 years later, they must have had some sense of how their hard work would transfer into an enjoyable experience for many a future traveler. Our imaginative reconstruction of the past and the road builders' curiosity of the future, although a century apart, are rooted in the Shawangunk landscape and connected through the design of the place.

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Undercliff Carriage Road, Mohonk Preserve

The Mohonk Preserve

The Hudson River Valley is recognized nationwide for playing host to some of America's most beautiful historic sites and scenic wonders. It should come as no surprise, then, that this small section of the Northeast contains precious wildlife preserves that protect some of the region's rare natural wonders while providing educational and recreational opportunities for locals and visitors alike. The Mohonk Nature Preserve and the Mohonk Mountain House, located in the Shawangunk Mountains just fifteen miles west of Poughkeepsie, have a long history of conservation, education, and recreation.

Alfred and Albert Smiley first purchased Mohonk as a 280-acre parcel in 1869 with hopes of preserving it by creating a mountainside resort. The Mohonk Mountain House was a success, and continues to operate today, at the northern end of the Preserve. The Smiley family eventually formed the Mohonk Trust to manage designated conservation and recreation areas. Today, the Mohonk Preserve is home to approximately 7,000 acres of pristine natural habitat. Each year, Preserve staff work to maintain its function as a wildlife preserve as well as a place where over 150,000 visitors annually hike, bike, and come to explore; they closely monitor land erosion patterns as well as plant and wildlife populations.

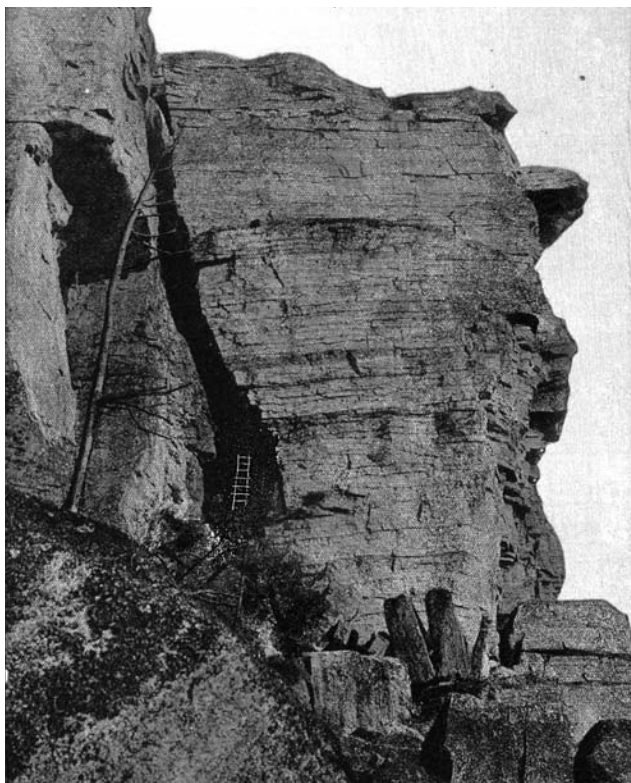
Every few years, park planners re-direct trails to help maintain the integrity of the land and keep a healthy balance between visitors and nature.

The staff also is responsible for maintaining cultural relics: century-old carriage roads, gazebos, and bridges. They maintain and interpret the remains of the Trapps hamlet, a mountain community populated by subsistence farmers, berry pickers, and barrel- and millstone-makers. Only the Van Leuven cabin remains, but Preserve staff interpret the entire community who lived and worked in this secluded mountain region by using nearby ruins and archaeological finds as well.

The Mohonk Preserve is committed to conservation; they work year-round to protect and monitor the many caves, ravines, cliff faces, streams, swamps, and pine barrens that house countless rare or endangered species of plant and animal life. These ecosystems provide year-round homes to many types of animals and key stopping points in the migration of several bird species. The Preserve partners with other public and private organizations to help maintain the vast expanse of land in the Shawangunk Ridge Biodiversity Program. It also participates in the Shawangunk Ridge Coalition, which is active in educating nearby residents and businesses on how to contribute to the conservation of nature in the area.

Mohonk Preserve boasts an impressive educational program that focuses on parkland and includes an outreach component that targets area schools and camps. Established in 1994, the Nature Access Program has been instrumental in organizing field studies for school-age children, tours for disabled persons, summer camps, and even aid in designing rehabilitation programs for patients in need of both physical and psychological therapy. The outreach program operates in grades K-12, and meets New York State Learning Standards in Health, Social Studies, Math, Science, and Technology. These programs help children understand specific aspects of nature and serve as the basis for building a respectful relationship with the environment.

Finally, the Preserve is committed to research. The research center was established in 1980 in honor of Daniel Smiley, who was co-founder of the Preserve as well as an influential natural scientist. The center engages research associates from across the country, seeking to use the Preserve as a basis for their studies. It also is home to the oldest weather station in New York. In past years, research has focused on patterns of amphibian breeding, peregrine falcon nesting, bird counts and surveys, deer management, insect studies, and studies concerning plant life and invasive species. They offer internship opportunities, as well as volunteer positions for those seeking to get involved in the research constantly being conducted there.



COURTESY OF HUDSON RIVER VALLEY HERITAGE

Cliffside trail, from an historic postcard

The Mohonk Nature Preserve conducts one of New York's largest and most successful conservation programs, and has done so for more than 100 years. It has been instrumental in providing recreation to hundreds of thousands of nature lovers without jeopardizing the integrity of the park's natural function. Mohonk serves to protect, educate, research, and entertain, and has done so flawlessly since its establishment in the mid-1800s. It remains one of the country's most pristine natural preserves, and will continue to serve the needs of all those who take an interest in its beauty, as well as to inform our understanding of the natural world.

The Mohonk Nature Preserve is open 365 days a year from sunrise to sunset. Day passes for hikers, bikers, and climbers may be purchased at the visitor's center from 9-5 p.m. for \$10-\$15; an annual membership grants visitors free access. For more information on visiting the Preserve, visit www.mohonkpreserve.org. For more information on the Mohonk Mountain House, please visit www.mohonk.com.

—Alyssa Hewitt, Marist '10

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