
Fig. 1 John Bard, 1716-1799, from an original oil painting. (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt N.H.S., Hyde Park, N.Y.).

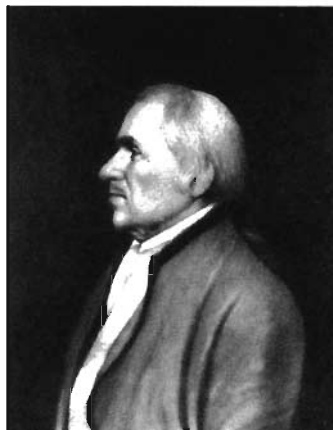


Fig. 2 Samuel Bard, 1742-1821, from an original oil painting. (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt N.H.S., Hyde Park, N.Y.).



Fig. 3 David Hosack, 1769-1835, from an engraving. (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt N.H.S., Hyde Park, N.Y.).

Wilderness to Landscape Garden: The Early Development of Hyde Park

by Robert M. Toole

"[Hyde Park is] justly celebrated as one of the finest specimens of the modern style of Landscape Gardening in America."

—Andrew Jackson Downing, 1841¹

Introduction

Tracing the influence of historic landscape gardening in the Hudson River Valley, no estate property is of more importance than Hyde Park. Located along the eastern shore of the Hudson 75 miles north of New York City, the property is today the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, operated by the National Park Service. Over a span of seventy years, between 1763 and 1835, Hyde Park was developed by three generations of owners, each building on the previous efforts. Here, Dr. John Bard, his son Dr. Samuel Bard, and their professional and intellectual heir, Dr. David Hosack provide an opportunity to study the evolution of landscape garden design, at a critical moment, in the formative years of the United States.

In the Romantic period, from about 1800 to the Civil War (1860), landscape gardening was practiced as a fine art. This was an age of prosperity, prideful nationalism and cultural ambitions that encouraged excellence in a variety of artistic endeavors. Along the Hudson, these achievements included the writings of Washington Irving and

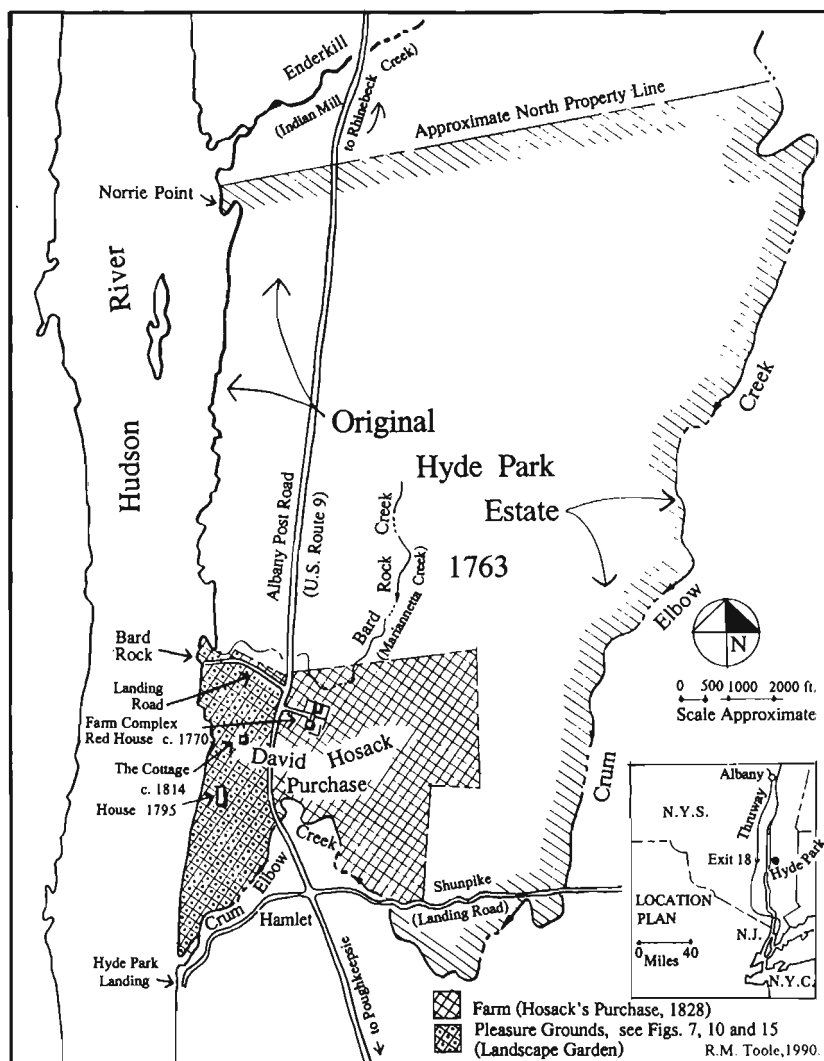


Fig. 4 Hyde Park Land Areas, by R.M. Toole, 1990.

the other Knickerbockers, the picturesque architecture of Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing, the paintings of Thomas Cole and the other members of the Hudson River School, and the landscape gardening of property owners that ennobled the Valley's landscape.² The development of Hyde Park created a master work of American landscape gardening, called in 1835, "the most celebrated [country seat] in America."³

After David Hosack's death, Hyde Park continued as a residential property, though its owners and their gardening efforts were less distinguished than those of the Bards and Hosack. Today, most of the earlier garden embellishments have vanished or have been altered. All the earlier architectural features, including the main house, out-buildings, bridges and garden ornaments, have been replaced or dismantled. Old trees have died, newer plantings are now mature. By the 20th century, the landscape garden at Hyde Park had been nearly forgotten.⁴

Still, for all of Hyde Park's lost landscape design heritage, the site's early layout and its historic integrity are in many ways well preserved. The landscape's present spatial arrangements, and the visual quality of the landscape, closely reflect Hyde Park's early creation. While original elements have been replaced, new site features often continue to serve an original design purpose. Moreover, there remains an artful quality to the landscape that reveals much of its intended aesthetic. The view from the Hyde Park escarpment continues as one of the finest in the Hudson River Valley. Today, appreciation for the historic landscape at Hyde Park is fostering renewed interest in its study and interpretation. The National Park Service is currently preparing a historic landscape report for the property which will enhance understanding of this remarkable garden artifact.

Colonial Period: Dr. John Bard

In 1763, John Bard (1716-1799),⁵ a prominent New York City physician, acquired about 3,600 acres of generally undeveloped land on the Hudson River. The site, about three miles long and two miles wide, lay between the Crum Elbow Creek on the south, and a small stream, the Enderkill, on the north. The Crum Elbow Creek also formed the east boundary (see map, Fig. 4).

Hyde Park was acquired from the descendants of a Frenchman, Peter Fauconnier, whose granddaughter, Susanne Valleau, John Bard married in 1737.⁶ Peter Fauconnier, and others, had received the original wilderness tract in 1705 from the colonial governor, Edward Hyde. The name Hyde Park was applied from an early date in honor

of the colonial governor.⁷ Fauconnier never lived on the property, which he kept for purely speculative purposes. By 1763, Hyde Park may have been the home for one or more small, independent farms, or perhaps tenant farmers.⁸

In that year, after an innovative and esteemed medical career in New York City, John Bard sought the retiring, pastoral life enamored by those of his position and generation. John Bard had been raised in privileged circumstances, on a farm estate near Philadelphia. He was a close acquaintance of Benjamin Franklin and enjoyed a well earned professional reputation in medicine. While participating in the cultural activity of New York City, John Bard had a deep rooted appreciation for country life. As a medical practitioner, he had a direct involvement with botany and horticulture. Further, he sought the bucolic charms of Hyde Park as an ideal, somewhat removed from the economic and functional preoccupation of the earlier Hudson River estate owners.⁹ Despite John Bard's credentials and a general change in emphasis and motivation in the late Colonial period, Hyde Park's early physical development does not seem to deviate far from older colonial models. Bard's attention to utility and practicality was typical of other early manor residences along the Hudson.¹⁰

At Hyde Park, the land rises sharply from the river's edge to an escarpment. The shoreline was alternately marsh and exposed rock as was typical of the region. One rocky shelf seems to have influenced initial development even before John Bard's purchase. Today called Bard Rock, it was referred to in 1768 as "a large flat rock, which forms a natural wharff."¹¹ An early map¹² shows a house located near this landing point, with a road leading from it uphill along the Mariannetta Creek (today's Bard Rock Creek), to the public road—the Kings Highway, later the Albany Post Road (today's U.S. Route 9). This early layout attests to the importance in this period of convenient access to river landings.

The riverside house, labelled "Dr. Bard's house" on this early map, may pre-date 1763. It was described in a 1768 account as a "good house," in contrast with a "new barn." The "new barn" was part of a farm complex developed by John Bard on the east side of the public road at the top of the landing road (see Fig. 4). This farmstead, located in the southwest corner of Hyde Park, complemented the residential property that would evolve before and after the Revolutionary War. This core area, the future ornamental landscape, remains today as the 200+ acre Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site.

John Bard's development of Hyde Park was compromised by his medical practice in New York City and his general lack of invest-

ment capital. In fact, he had ongoing financial difficulties and his aspirations for Hyde Park were tempered by the reality of his financial situation. Ornamental landscape improvements were restricted. It is in this modest context that shortly after John Bard acquired Hyde Park, his son, 21 year old Samuel Bard, wrote to his father from Edinburgh, Scotland, where he was studying medicine. Samuel expressed the wish to be with his father "in laying out your grounds."¹³

Samuel Bard's letters are of interest because in them he discusses landscape design, citing current English commentary and advising on the latest design ideas applicable to the layout of a property like Hyde Park. We will return to Samuel Bard's thoughts on landscape gardening when it is his turn to shape Hyde Park. For now, Samuel Bard's letters prove that English garden design theory was transmitted to America quickly. In reality, John Bard was not in the position to carry out his son's thoughts on landscape design. As related to landscape gardening, this situation was typical of colonial circumstances in America.

Financial reverses compelled John Bard to offer Hyde Park for sale in 1768, five years after its purchase. A notice advertising the sale identified the site conditions at that time. The advertisement stated "valuable improvements:—particularly to the southward," this a reference to Bard's developing farmstead. Here, east and west of the public road, was "A Large Well Improved Farm" that included a "young" orchard of about 600 trees, roughly 35 acres of meadow and 150 acres "cleared and ready for tilling." A portion of this open ground seems to have included the nearly level plateau extending from the farm complex to the edge of the escarpment, but with only about 5% of the total 3,600 acres prepared for agricultural use, the property's undeveloped status is made clear: "The tract in general is filled with exceeding timber, . . . and abounds in rich swamps."

Despite the 1768 sales notice, John Bard never disposed of Hyde Park, but he did sell portions of the property from time to time, about 1,500 acres in his lifetime. These land sales, combined with income from his medical practice, enabled John Bard to continue the farm development that was undertaken, "particularly in the southward," over the next thirty years. This work included the basics: clearing, grading and seeding of pastures, development of arable land and orchards, building of roads, paths, utility buildings and farm related accessories. One major project involved the building of mills along the Crum Elbow Creek. The Creek, which falls about 250 feet in a distance of a mile, was dammed to provide water power for numerous mills constructed by Bard and others. Capital invest-



Fig. 5 Drawing of Red House (John Bard's House), inscribed: "Built 1772 by John Bard," from C. W. Snell "History of 'Hyde Park' Estate," 1956. Snell attributes this sketch to Mr. Edwin Bramin who copied it from an original in the FDR Library, Hyde Park, N.Y. (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt N.H.S., Hyde Park, N.Y.).

ments and practical improvements continued throughout much of John Bard's residence, until well after the Revolutionary War. Together, John Bard's work in the period 1763-1790 reflected earlier colonial practices.

There is the impression that John Bard considered Hyde Park a farm estate, and himself a farm developer. Beginning with a wilderness, the infrastructure of the farm needed to be established first. It seems likely that John Bard's disposable income and leisure time at Hyde Park never increased to the point where an extensive ornamental landscape could be achieved and sustained. We know John Bard as a knowledgeable plantsman; he developed an extensive orchard and grew medicinal plants for his son's active medical practice. This, however, reveals little about Hyde Park's landscape design or its intended aesthetic.

Sometime after 1770, and through the Revolutionary War period, John Bard lived in what was called 'Red House,' a simple vernacular dwelling (see Fig. 5). Located on the east side of the turnpike, it was in somewhat unpretentious surroundings, close to the farm complex. Notably, Red House lacked direct river views, though the close-by

escarpment must have served from an early date as an overlook. As discussed below, there is evidence, in the preservation of trees and the extent of clearing (as it changed over time), that the general park-like treatment of the plateau and river-front at Hyde Park began under John Bard's ownership. There is no reason to doubt that the elder Bard appreciated the aesthetic potentials offered in this scenic corner of Hyde Park. While he developed his farm complex and sold portions of the property (especially in the northern extremities), John Bard seems to have retained a sense that the plateau and river-front were reserved as a park, even as mills dominated Crum Elbow Creek and Bard Rock served as a work-a-day landing. Over time, the value placed on native scenery, already apparent in John Bard's era, grew steadily. So too, landscape design fashion progressed toward appreciation for wilder, natural situations suited to the attributes of the Hudson River Valley.¹⁴

Federal Period: Dr. Samuel Bard

Colonial period gardens and landscape layouts remained in place throughout the turmoil of the Revolutionary War and the anxious nation-building that followed. The Hudson River Valley emerged slowly from the Revolution and its aftermath. Many old manors and farm estates, with their functional layouts and old garden beds, were intact. Few new residential landscapes had been created during the nearly twenty years of disruption. In this context, late eighteenth century development provides an opportunity to observe new trends in landscape and garden design in the new United States.

Illustrative of this was the continued improvements at Hyde Park, now reduced to about 2,000 acres. To be near his aged father, Samuel Bard (1742-1821) developed a substantial residence at Hyde Park beginning in 1795, and he soon moved there permanently. John Bard lived at Red House until his death in 1799.

Samuel Bard, like his father, was a notable medical practitioner and community leader in New York City. He had been in partnership with his father since returning from studies in Edinburgh in 1765. Samuel Bard also helped established several medical institutions in New York, and was co-founder of the New York Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Manufacturing and Useful Arts, suggesting his broad interests and accomplishments. Even more than his father, Samuel Bard was a skilled botanist and horticulturist, these studies being integral to medical practice at the time. His son-in-law and biographer, John McVickar, said Samuel Bard favored a "poetic enjoyment of the beauties of nature,—his taste in planning, [and]



Fig. 6 Watercolor of Samuel Bard's House (site of today's Vanderbilt mansion), from J. Brett Langstaff, *Dr. Bard at Hyde Park*, p. 198 (opposite). The original is said to be in the New York Public Library, Print Room. C.W. Snell, "History of the 'Hyde Park' Estate" (1956), attributes this drawing to David McNeely Stauffer. (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt N.H.S., Hyde Park, N.Y.).

fondness for effecting improvements. In the flowers and fruits of the garden [at Hyde Park], he became a learned and skilled horticulturist,—conversed, read and wrote, upon the subject."¹⁵

Between 1763 and 1766, as a medical student in Edinburgh, Samuel Bard became interested in landscape gardening. Of particular interest was Lord Henry Home Kames (1696-1782), and his influential book, *Elements of Criticism* (1762). Published the year before Bard arrived in Edinburgh, the book contained a discourse on landscape gardening. Samuel Bard not only knew this work but had apparently also visited Lord Kames' property outside Edinburgh.¹⁶ Lord Kames saw landscape and garden design as an extension of the beauties of nature. He advocated an end to geometry, regular and symmetrical arrangements in the landscape, with the exception of areas close to the house. Here, regularity was favored as a complement to the architecture. This design approach, in the 1760's, was in keeping with accepted practices in England, but it must be remembered that this was a time when the whole idea of landscape design was in a period of momentous change. Even at this date, for some connoisseurs, any

hint of geometric regularity in the landscape was thought to be old-fashioned. Lord Kames' sense of landscape gardening can be termed transitional. His approach resulted in an amalgam, combining the geometry of the older tradition with the natural appearing design work that would culminate the evolution of the English landscape garden for 'Capability' Brown, followed by the promoters of picturesque taste at the end of the 18th century.¹⁷

Lord Kames' ideas influenced a pre-Romantic generation who found garden and landscape aesthetics in intellectual ideas, often relying on geometric arrangements, order and symmetry to realize their intended effects. This was not an age given to spontaneous emotional outbursts or reveries. Still, while not yet dominated by a romantic mood, the themes of "Nature" found Kames, and the young, impressionable Samuel Bard, at their least guarded. As Kames put it: "A taste for natural objects is born with us in perfection; for relishing . . . a rich landscape . . . culture [i.e., intellect] is unnecessary."¹⁸

Samuel Bard's observations and advice ranged from generalities: "I find those [landscape gardens] the most beautiful where nature is suffered to be our guide,"¹⁹ to specific ideas: "I would have in my garden alcoves and temples dedicated to the memory of my best friends."²⁰ Taken together, Bard's comments show an enthusiastic interest in landscape garden design as practiced in England during this important phase of its history.

Samuel Bard developed his home at Hyde Park while in his mid-50's; his taste well established. The house, an elegant Federal style structure (see Fig. 6) was located on the site of the present Vanderbilt house away from the farm complex and Red House (see Fig. 7). Here it was sited at the edge of the escarpment, at a point that protrudes, allowing a 180 degree prospect to the west. The selection of this location is indicative of a Federal period interest in dramatic house sitings on the Hudson. From this location, one could see out and the bright white structure could also be seen. This preference in siting continued for Greek Revival houses, in fashion a quarter century later. Soon after that a blatantly exposed house would be considered ostentatious.

For Samuel Bard, much of the area west of the Post Road, from Mariannetta Creek (Bard Rock Creek) on the north, to Crum Elbow Creek on the south (200+ acres), was reserved as an ornamental landscape, called variously the pleasure grounds, demesne or home ground. This area was treated as a landscape garden composition. Samuel Bard's new house was set directly on open turf, without foundation plantings or walled terraces. An approach avenue entered on

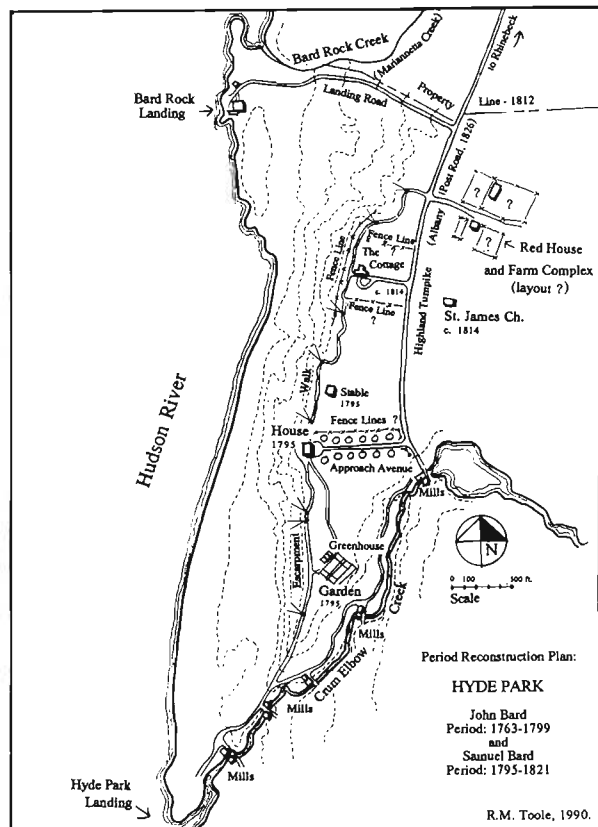


Fig. 7 Period Reconstruction Plan, Hyde Park Landscape Components—1763 to 1821, by R.M. Toole, 1990.

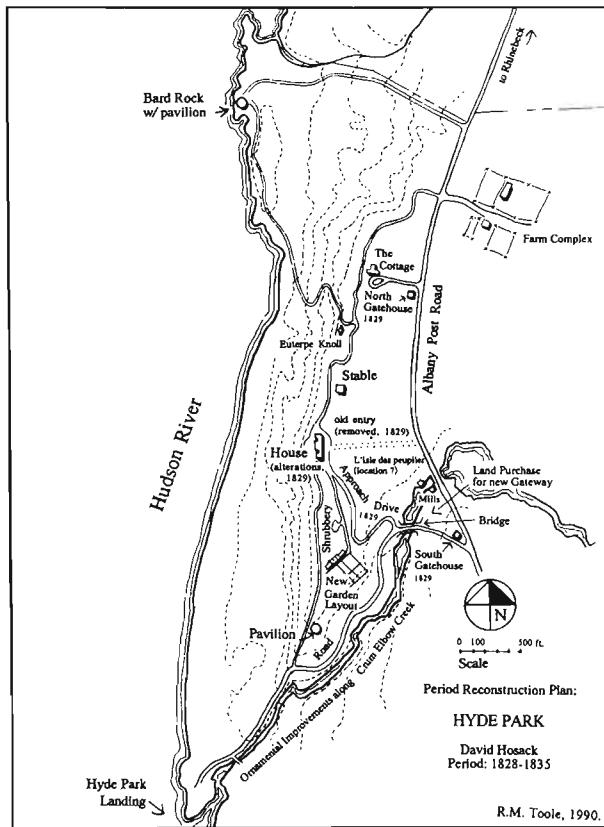


Fig. 10 Period Reconstruction Plan, Hyde Park Landscape Components—1828 to 1835, by R.M. Toole, 1990.

a straight alignment directly from the Post Road. Its alignment was determined by the symmetry of the house. Given evolving trend in England during the 1790's, Samuel Bard's entry avenue might be considered old-fashion. In America, appreciation for the elegance of geometrical arrangements was essentially a hold-over from the earlier garden traditions, the Anglo-Dutch gardens of the late 17th century.

A contrast to the endless wilderness and rougher aspects of country life in this period, a straight approach drive, fronted with an ornamental white picket fence and fitted with regularly spaced avenue trees, provided elegance and status. By the end of the 18th century it was a form commonly seen in America. Samuel Bard had stated the rationale thirty years before when he wrote to his father: "I think straight lines should be particularly avoided, except where they serve to lead the eye to some distant and beautiful object."²¹ Bard, and others, felt their Federal style houses were the "beautiful objects" worthy of a straight approach.

Fence lines may also have been installed flanking the approach avenue and around the house to control grazing animals. There may have been landscape features, but typically this would have been a simple, orderly treatment. From the straight approach avenue, the house was seen as a two-dimensional facade of symmetrical proportions. From the River, it held a commanding position high on the bluff, a landmark to river traffic. The prominence of the white house and the dominance of the fence lines and regularly spaced plantings, presented an assembled, man-made scene in marked contrast to the taste that would emerge in the early 19th century. For now, the house was formally presented as a sculptural object, viewed in a park-like setting.

Unlike the straight approach and the geometry close to Samuel Bard's house, the placement of garden beds, and the stable/coach house complex, was up-to-date and a departure from previous American practice. The kitchen gardens and utilitarian components, typically seen in the Colonial period either connected directly with the house or clustered nearby, were set away from the house here. Samuel Bard located these auxiliary buildings and their work yards in isolated areas where their architecture and day-to-day operations could be effectively screened from areas close to the house. The concern was to separate divergent functions and to enhance the sculptural effect of the classical house by providing the uncluttered sweep of parkland needed for that effect. The practice of enveloping the house in a park had evolved as a basic theme of the English

landscape gardening. Typically parkland was not seen around American houses until the end of the 18th century, so Samuel Bard's park, as acquired from his father, is an early example of this form in America.

After positioning his house, Samuel Bard laid out the kitchen gardens, and later a greenhouse, on the site of today's 'Walled Gardens,' about 1,000 feet south of the house on a sheltered south facing slope. In selecting this location, Samuel Bard was following his advice, expressed in a 1764 letter, to consider the best advantage of the natural site in placing the various site components: "The principal thing to be observed in planning a pleasure ground, seems to me to be the situation of the ground, and the storms and winds, the country is most liable to."²² Perhaps responding to the winds, the stable area was located about 500 feet north of the house, set into what seems to have been an existing grove of trees.

Despite the prominence of the straight approach drive from the Post Road, access from the river landing at the mouth of Crum Elbow Creek was the approach route for many visitors. Because of its proximity to development south and east of the Hyde Park estate, the mouth of the Crum Elbow became the local public landing. From this landing, visitors would enter Hyde Park from the south and ascend the south face of the escarpment along the ridge line. This approach route turned away from the Crum Elbow Creek and so avoided the mills developed there.

As indicated above, accounts written just after Samuel Bard's death describe the plateau as a long maturing park that must have been initiated before he built his house there. The level ground above the escarpment seems to have been cleared from an early date, but in 1829 there remained "an endless variety of venerable forest trees"²³ preserved from John Bard's original development. Over time, these old trees had gained stature as specimens. As described in the 1830's "the forest trees which surround the domicile are . . . the natives . . . in our forest; some of the oaks are a century in age, and all are large and so grouped and intermingled."²⁴ Another account notes a "celebrated belt of forest trees."²⁵

Carriage drives led north from Samuel Bard's house to the stable/coach house area and the north gate, opposite the entrance to the farm complex and Red House. In 1812, a land sale north of the Bard Rock landing road established the north boundary of Samuel Bard's river front.²⁶ Also at this time, a separate cottage property was subdivided in this area for Samuel Bard's daughter, Eliza, and her husband, Rev. John McVickar. Called the "Cottage," it was described



Fig. 8 'View from Hyde Park' from J.B. Langstaff, *Doctor Bard of Hyde Park*, (1942). Langstaff, who found this painting in an unidentified private collection, attributed it to John R. Murray, dated 1806. The family members are identified, left to right: at the fence, J. McVickar (Samuel Bard's son-in-law); at the telescope, Dr. Samuel Bard; then, Sarah Bard (sister-in-law); William Bard (Samuel's son); Mary Bard (Samuel's wife); Samuel Bard Jr. (a grandson); and Eliza Bard (a daughter). (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt N.H.S., Hyde Park, N.Y.).

as "situated at the northerly end of the park,"²⁷ and extended from the public road, west to the escarpment edge.

Between the "bold eminence,"²⁸ of the escarpment and the River was an extensive river-front park over "ground broken with many knowls, open glades, and the ravines, . . . the more open compartments too, enlivened by the interspersions of clumps and single trees."²⁹ An 1806 painting of the scene (see Fig. 8) shows that just below the escarpment edge was a fence line, set low enough to be below the view, but presumably controlling grazing animals. "At one time . . ." this area "contained some fine deer."³⁰

In essence then, Samuel Bard's landscape design efforts, as now understood from the available documentation, were direct interpretations of the parkland themes and expressions of English landscape gardening as practiced since the mid-eighteenth century. Bard's European experience as a young man, and the influence of Lord Kames, are direct, but colonial practices, adapted from typical English models, are also closely reflected in Bard's design approach.

Romantic Period: Dr. David Hosack and André Parmentier

Sixty years after the property's first development, the work of Doctors John and Samuel Bard was brought to an artistic culmination with the landscape gardening of Dr. David Hosack (1769-1835).³¹ In turn, landscape design at Hyde Park was influenced by one of the earliest landscape gardeners to practice professionally in America, the Belgian, André Parmentier.

Samuel Bard died in 1821. In 1828, after several years of family indecision, Hyde Park was sold to David Hosack. By then the property's size had been reduced to the 200+ acre river front and about 350 farm acres east of the Albany Post Road (see Fig. 4). While the property was sold out of the Bard family, its continuity was assured because David Hosack was the Bards' heir in all but name. He had been a close friend of Samuel Bard and had visited Hyde Park often. For Hosack, the Bards were kindred spirits.

David Hosack was 59 years old when he purchased Hyde Park. He was a prominent man of his time and described as a man of "great taste."³⁷ A native New Yorker, recent historical evaluations place him as "the leading light" of "a society as cultivated as, and more cosmopolitan than, the more brilliant Boston circles."³³ Hosack was a substantial patron of the arts. His library at Hyde Park was one of the largest collections in the United States. He also kept an impressive picture gallery at Hyde Park which included several works by Thomas Cole, founder of the Hudson River School.

David Hosack had been a student, and later a colleague, of Samuel Bard. He returned to New York in 1794 after medical training and apprenticeship in Philadelphia and England. As with the Bards, Hosack was professionally involved with botany and horticulture. Notably, Hosack returned from his medical training in England with a unique collection of plants from the herbarium of Linnaeus.³⁴ In 1795, he was in New York, serving as Professor of Botany at Columbia College, the medical school Samuel Bard helped found (originally called Kings College).

In 1801, Hosack, with Samuel Bard's urging and support, directed the development of the earliest "physic" garden in New York, the Elgin Gardens, located on the site of today's Rockefeller Center in midtown Manhattan. This twenty-acre garden, used for the cultivation of medicinal plants, was also enjoyed for its ornamental garden effects. It remained under Hosack's direct and indirect guidance until it was disassembled before 1820. At that time, some of the remaining plants were removed to Hyde Park.³⁵ In 1822, the New York Horti-



Fig. 9 'View from Hyde Park,' engraving by William H. Bartlett, from N.P. Willis, American Scenery, 1837. (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt N.H.S., Hyde Park, N.Y.).

cultural Society, the first of its kind in America, was founded and David Hosack soon became its president. Six years later, as the new owner of Hyde Park, Hosack retired and assured a friend that “agriculture and horticulture will now occupy the residue of my life.”³⁶

There are many similarities between the Bards and Hosack but it is important to recognize the differences. In describing Hosack’s landscape gardening, his alterations and enhancements of the older Hyde Park layout, changes in attitude are revealed that influenced landscape design and its appreciation. Hosack and his generation grew up in the promising and prideful circumstances of the early Republic, at a time given to romantic themes seldom cultivated in the earlier Colonial period. For Hosack and his generation, Romanticism epitomized the swing from an earlier 18th century focus on the supremacy of intellect and reason to a 19th century concern for emotion and feeling; a shift that was crucial to all the arts in America’s pre-Civil War period. As such, the spirit of the times was broadly influenced by international Romanticism. The Romantic Movement amounted to a widely shared contrast to purely rational and logical

considerations that had long defined cultural life in provincial America. As part of this shift, the appeal of nature took precedence over whatever interest there had been for the old style of geometric garden and landscape design, what A.J. Downing called “the ancient style . . . of regularity, symmetry, and the display of labored art.”³⁷

In 1828, the view from the escarpment at Hyde Park remained largely unchanged from its appearance in the Bards’ era (see Fig. 9), but for many the view and the Valley itself were now considered paragons of romantic and picturesque beauty. For those strolling along the Hyde Park overlook, the view of the River and the Catskills beyond had become “most magical . . . there is a weird and almost spiritual purity [to the scene] that sometimes seems hardly to belong to earth.”³⁸ With this mental imagery, those engaged in the esoteric practice of landscape gardening gained a heightened aesthetic purpose. In turn, the Hudson River Valley proved to be a cultural milieu that nurtured landscape gardening and in some respects defined its design characteristics.³⁹ By the mid- 19th century, the Hudson River Valley had become a center of this pursuit.⁴⁰

Unlike the previous owners of Hyde Park, David Hosack had considerable financial resources. In 1825, having been widowed for the second time,⁴¹ Hosack married Magdalena Coster, widow of Henry A. Coster, a wealthy merchant. Mrs. Coster had inherited her first husband’s fortune and these resources augmented Hosack’s earnings as one of New York City’s most respected physicians. These factors produced an eager patron able to pursue landscape gardening on a grand scale. After his first year of ownership, Hosack was reported to have spent about \$100,000 on his “ornamental improvements” at Hyde Park,⁴² a figure that would equal about \$1,000,000 in today’s currency.

Much is known of David Hosack’s landscape garden at Hyde Park. Many accounts survive describing the property during, and just after, Hosack’s seven-year residency. In several instances, these diaries, travel books and letters were the observations of informed visitors well able to discuss and evaluate landscape gardening. Several sketches were made of the property during this period. Also, a map of the property showing some of the basic design elements of the scheme survives.⁴³

Influencing the landscape design at Hyde Park was André Parmentier (1780-1830), a practicing landscape gardener who operated a nursery in Brooklyn.⁴⁴ David Hosack had known Parmentier from the time of his arrival in the United States in 1824. Parmentier was perhaps the most important of the few landscape designers working in the early years of the Republic. In 1841, A.J. Downing offered the opinion that Parmentier had been “the only practitioner of the art,

of any note,” and that his “labours and example [had] effected, directly, far more Landscape Gardening in America than those of any other individual whatever.”⁴⁵

André Parmentier, who was forty years old when he came to America, was one of a family of distinguished nurserymen and horticulturists. As such, he was a skilled and experienced professional before his arrival. For these reasons, he was well suited to fill a role in the development of landscape gardening in the early years of the United States. Parmentier outlined some of his ideas in a brief essay, entitled “Landscapes and Picturesque Gardens” published in Thomas Fessenden’s *The New American Gardener*, in 1828, the year David Hosack purchased Hyde Park. In this essay, Parmentier praised picturesque garden effects, for Europeans a dominant theme since the late 18th century.⁴⁶ As Parmentier put it, in by then standard rhetoric: “Gardens are now treated like landscapes, the charms of which are not to be improved by any rules of art,” and “to understand this style of garden requires a quick perception of the beauties of a landscape.” This reliance on a purely natural look was particularly fitting in the Hudson River Valley and there is much evidence that the inspiration from native scenery was by this date widely recognized, at least by sophisticated property owners, like David Hosack, who might be engaged in landscape gardening. Parmentier also seems to have had a real affinity for the American situation and the picturesque and even sublime natural landscape effects that came into play when landscape gardening on the Hudson. In turn, Parmentier was apparently eagerly consulted. He died suddenly, only six years after his arrival and within eighteen months of the start of Hosack’s Hyde Park project.

The specifics of Parmentier’s involvement with Hosack’s design work at Hyde Park are somewhat unclear but the importance of his role is confirmed by A.J. Downing, who wrote in 1841 that “the plans for laying out the grounds [at Hyde Park] were furnished by Parmentier.”⁴⁷ On first review, this attribution seems too broad, ignoring as it does the earlier work of the Bards from which Hosack began, and also Hosack’s own role.⁴⁸ Still, though evidence and details of Parmentier’s commission are sketchy, Downing’s words are emphatic and come from a knowledgeable commentator who understood the terms he was using.

In clarifying this situation, David Hosack’s new “plans” did incorporate the Bards’ earlier improvements and siting decisions. But for Downing, what mattered was the intended aesthetics of landscape gardening and in this respect Hosack and Parmentier radically altered

Hyde Park, in some cases redesigned previous work to achieve their goals. Given the documentation and the traditional role played in this era, Hyde Park after Hosack's tenure probably can be accurately described as a collaborative effort, but Parmentier's work as overall designer, at a critical moment, is significant. In turn, Hyde Park is one of Parmentier's few known commissions in landscape design and portions of the work he influenced there have survived. Hosack's contribution as client and owner is difficult to evaluate. Given his skills, interests and involvement Hosack's role seems decisive, and it was certainly important in the way of carrying out the goals and design schemes determined during Parmentier's consultation. Noting his direct involvement in the landscape work, a contemporary stated in 1830: "He [Hosack] rises early, and soon repairs to the point where his presence is most required, allowing himself little relaxation either of mind or muscle. He never suffers his talents to be hid in a napkin, nor his wealth hoarded under a miser's key."⁴⁹

At Hyde Park, owner and professional designer worked sympathetically within the framework established by the Bards. Hosack and Parmentier were left to modify, expand and embellish the ornamental landscape. The focus of landscape gardening was on place-making. The design melded the pleasure grounds into a unified composition taking in all areas west of the Post Road. A visitor in 1834 described her tour to "both sides of the high road [Albany Post Road]; the farm on one side, and the pleasure grounds on the other."⁵⁰

Hosack got an early start on his project. By late autumn, 1828, he had started planning, no doubt in consultation with André Parmentier. As inferred from A.J. Downing's narrative, the placement of drives and footpaths, which directed and so defined the garden experience, and new plantings ("new plantations," Downing called them), were perhaps the most important design contributions resulting from Hosack's consultation with Parmentier. As Parmentier died late in 1830, his design consultation seems to have been largely formulated by the 1829 construction season when work began in earnest. As such, this would have allowed two full seasons for work to continue under Parmentier's (and Hosack's) supervision.

At the start, in March, 1829, with ice still on the Hudson, Hosack wrote saying that he would be up-river from New York City in a month, to "determine the amount of work to be done in the present year."⁵¹ The design implications are apparent when Hosack related his wish to "reserve and cultivate" ground around the 'Cottage' developed for Eliza and her husband John McVickar on the open plateau north of Samuel Bard's 1795 house. This comment suggests

Hosack's desire to integrate this separate property into a more unified scheme. Hosack specifically mentioned "removing fences," such as those shown in the 1806 painting fronting the McVickar place along the escarpment's edge (see Fig. 9). As Parmentier had stated in his essay "Landscapes and Picturesque Gardens": "fences . . . should be concealed so as not to appear as boundaries to the establishment and present to the eye a disagreeable interruption in the prospect."

By autumn, 1829, improvements were "in progress on every part of the farm."⁵² Samuel Bard's 30 year-old house underwent major alterations. Hosack commissioned Town and Thompson, preeminent New York City architects of this period, to handle the architectural work. The Hyde Park work is credited to Martin Thompson, noted as a designer and builder.⁵³ The architect recomposed the formal massing by adding symmetrical wings to the original rectangular core. The fenestration was simplified and given cleaner, classical lines. While an improvement, the house apparently struck some as a rather awkward pile, less than the purity of the Greek Revival, then the fashion and "without any pretensions to architectural beauty."⁵⁴ Apparently Martin Thompson thought the design worthy, as a drawing of the house was exhibited at the National Academy in 1829. From the landscape perspective it is notable that classical architecture remained the central feature of landscape gardening.

Besides the alterations to the main house, Thompson supplied designs for the gatehouses built in 1830. One was at Hosack's new main entry gate and the other was at a north entrance near the Cottage. These gatehouses were Greek Revival designs. The north gatehouse was described by an admiring visitor: "This little building has been much and deservedly admired for its architectural beauty."⁵⁵ In addition, Town and Thompson may have provided plans for a reconstructed stable building and designs for some of the garden structures. This is not known with certainty.

In the period 1829-30, the straight approach avenue from the Post Road that led to the east front of Samuel Bard's house was removed. It was replaced with a new approach drive that was wholly different in effect and form. For Parmentier and Hosack, Samuel Bard's straight approach must have seemed old-fashioned. Its direct and unswerving focus on the house was considered tasteless and ostentatious, contrary to emerging romantic sensibilities. A drive that introduced the landscape first and treated the house as only one feature of the larger landscape composition was now desired.

The new entry scheme was a complex design and its construction would have been a considerable undertaking. The new drive was about

1,800 feet in length, replacing Samuel Bard's 700 foot long avenue. Though little is known about the project, the results are well preserved and may be studied today on the ground. Using the landscape's inherent character as the basis for the design, the scheme was clearly intended to present a varied and interesting serial experience for those entering the site. André Parmentier had defined the design concept in his essay on "Landscapes and Picturesque Gardens," when he stated that "the road which leads to [the house] may give a good idea of the extent of the proprietor's domains, and care should be taken that the road is proportioned to this extent. It [the approach drive] ought to be . . . gently serpentine." The approach drive from the Post Road began at the new gatehouse (at the site of today's somewhat reconfigured entrance).⁵⁶ To gain this entry point, Hosack purchased a small parcel of land southeast of the Crum Elbow Creek so that the approach drive could cross the Creek. Hosack does not seem to have demolished completely the mills that existed close-by. Instead he cleaned up the area, presenting the Creek, mills and all, as a picturesque ensemble.

After descending to the Creek, the new approach drive crossed on an "elegant wooden bridge."⁵⁷ The drive then climbed the far bank through a switch back curve. From this alignment, the scenery included the Crum Elbow ravine and the ornamental gardens that had evolved around the greenhouse. The approach drive then turned toward the northwest, opening out onto the plateau and parkland surrounding the house.

Arrival at the house was from the left, without a direct view of the facade head-on as had been the case for Samuel Bard's house. Along the approach drive there were no river views. Instead, the panoramic views were dramatically presented after passing through the house to the western front. As one visitor in 1836 described it: "Dismounting at the door [I was] invited . . . into the house and . . . followed . . . to the other side of the house, where might be seen a picture more glorious than ever mortal pencil designed."⁵⁸

Even before Hosack and Parmentier, others in America would have appreciated (and a few had even attempted) the extensive scene making that was realized with the new approach drive at Hyde Park. Still, this was one of the most ambitious landscape design schemes yet completed in America in the "Natural" or "Modern" style.⁵⁹

Crum Elbow Creek, previously a utilitarian landscape dominated by a variety of mill buildings, became a focus of Hosack's ornamental development. This is not surprising since the area has picturesque qualities highly prized at the time. Extensive improvements were made along the Creek. Besides the new approach drive, the

access from the river landing was realigned, avoiding the steep ridge line and instead continued along the Creek to connect with the new approach drive as it does today. On this route, the new bridge over the Crum Elbow was seen from below as a feature. One visitor called it a “very sweet composition.”⁶⁰ Improvements along the Crum Elbow Creek included damming and rock work to form pools and “artificial cascades.”⁶¹ The vegetation was judiciously thinned and pruned, and augmented with new plantings. In this way, the former mill stream was now described as a “copious stream . . . noisy as the Arno itself, filling the hanging gardens and groves on its borders with murmurs.”⁶² It was a “never tiring scene.”⁶³

Samuel Bard’s original kitchen gardens, at the site of his early greenhouse, were to evolve under Hosack and Parmentier from a partially utilitarian garden to one of considerable ornament. The greenhouse, or conservatory, and other horticultural facilities were upgraded and the garden beds were to some extent redesigned. In Hosack’s time, vegetable gardening seems to have been relocated to the farm complex east of the Post Road. Flower beds were noted as located “around the conservatories,”⁶⁴ and these are described as “parterres,”⁶⁵ suggesting some refinement, if not geometry, in the layout of this area. The design of these gardens was praised by several visitors. One said “the conservatory is remarkable in America,” and that “the flower garden [is] all that it can be.”⁶⁶

The ground between the house and old kitchen garden, bounded on the west by the escarpment and on the east by the approach drive, was laid out with shrub borders set out along walks. This extensive “shrubbery” extended over almost three acres of ground and was described in some detail by the landscape gardener A.J. Downing in his commentary on the property. This narrative was written after Hosack’s death when the plantings had reached maturity.

The shrubbery at Hyde Park, . . . which borders the walk leading from the mansion, to the hot-houses, . . . [is] a fine example of this mode of mingling woody and herbaceous plants. The belts or borders occupied by the shrubbery and flower-garden there, are perhaps from 25 to 35 feet in width, completely filled with a collection of shrubs and herbaceous plants; the smallest of the latter being quite near the walk; these succeeded by taller species receding from the front of the border, then follow shrubs of moderate size, advancing in height until the back ground of the whole is a rich mass of tall shrubs and trees of moderate size. The effect of this belt on so large a scale, in high keeping, is remarkably striking and elegant.

The deliberate design of the Hyde Park shrubbery relates it to planting themes practiced in England by the mid-18th century. The

careful layering of the plants, as described by Downing, is a technique well documented in numerous English examples. While not unique, the Hyde Park shrubbery was one of the finest such horticultural displays observed in the Hudson River Valley in this period.

It is likely (but uncertain) that Parmentier's influence included the layout of the shrubbery and other horticultural/planting schemes at Hyde Park. Parmentier did have definitive theories on ornamental plant design and there is little doubt that he contributed ideas and supplied some of the plants during his brief involvement. Parmentier believed in using shade trees close to the house, to complement the architectural massing. Away from the house, he recommended lighter foliage trees, like fruit trees, whose flowers and fruit provided woodland edges "of great beauty and interest." Shrubs, shade trees, and fruit trees could have been supplied from Parmentier's considerable inventory in his Brooklyn nursery.

David Hosack planned to write a descriptive catalogue of his plants. If actually undertaken, the inventory has not been located and we are left with only fleeting impressions of his famed display of plantsmanship. From the greenhouse "among the rich display of rare shrubs and plants, are the *Magnolia graniflora* [Bull Bay], the splendid *Strelitzia* [Bird of Paradise], the fragrant farnesianna [*Acacia farnesiana*], and a beautiful tree of the *Ficus elastica* or Indian rubber."⁶⁸ Elsewhere "contiguous to the green house is an extensive ornamental garden . . . trees, shrubs, and flowers; among which stands . . . the *Magnolia glanca* [*M. virginiana*, Sweet Swamp Bay], bearing large white flowers."⁶⁹ A young artist, Thomas Wharton, noted that "the flower beds are perfectly splendid." He recognized "the fringe tree [*Chionanthus virginica*] and *Althaea frutex* [*Hibiscus syriacus*] covered with flowers," and a "glossy *Magnolia* exhaling sweetest perfume."⁷⁰

Hosack actively sought plants for his collection at Hyde Park. By 1831 he had amassed a considerable number and continued to seek new additions. In January, 1831, for example, he wrote to nurseryman, Jesse Buel, asking: "If you should receive anything new in fruits—shrubbery or that you may consider a useful addition to my collection, I shall be glad to receive them in the spring before I publish my catalogue. I expect a visit from a Committee of the Lyceum of Natural History . . . I am therefore desirous of rendering my collection worthy of their notice."⁷¹

Besides the carriage drive system, footpaths provided alternate circulation throughout the pleasure grounds. The path system was important since it largely defined the viewpoints from which the landscape composition was experienced. At Hyde Park, the escarp-

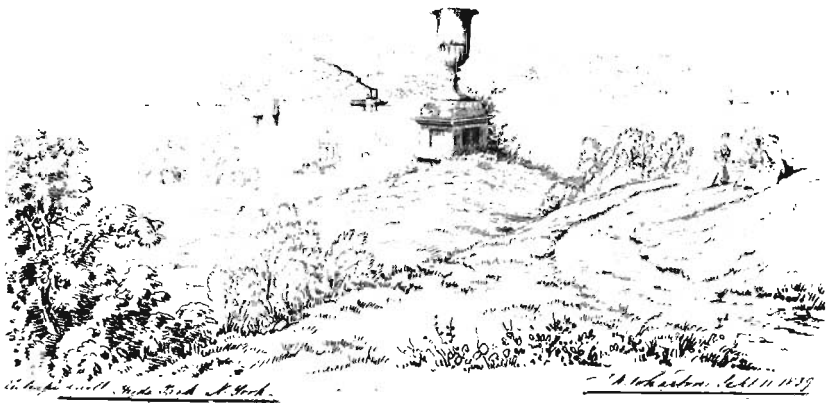


Fig. 11 'Euterpe Knoll, Hyde Park' by T.K. Wharton, believed originally drawn July, 1832, signed and dated (redrawn ?): September 11, 1839. The open prospect, with Bard Rock and its pavilion clearly visible, contrasts with the present wooded conditions in this area. (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt N.H.S., Hyde Park, N.Y.).

ment walk was the most important of these routes. Ennobled by splendid old trees, the panoramic views from the escarpment edge remained Hyde Park's finest feature. Another path descended the escarpment at a break in the steep slope north of the house. From this point the path dropped dramatically through a ravine and along a tidal cove, to Bard Rock. By this date, the early landing at Bard Rock had been given over to ornamental purposes.⁷²

Along the escarpment walk, and elsewhere, there were "seats scattered here and there from which you can survey at leisure . . . the exquisite beauty of the river scenery below."⁷³ In addition to incidental seats, the landscape garden included several prominent features. All were designed in the classical style, no rustic elements are recorded or illustrated. The first of these is the pavilion at Bard Rock. This structure is illustrated in drawings by Thomas K. Wharton, a young artist commissioned by David Hosack in 1832 to complete a series of drawings of the property. In the artist's sketches (see Fig. 11 and 12), the pavilion is a domed and columned temple set dramatically against the river scene. The Bard Rock pavilion seems very



Fig. 12 'Crystal Cove, Hyde Park' by T.K. Wharton, believed originally drawn in July, 1832, signed and dated (redrawn ?): September 11, 1939. The view is from along the shore (prior to the railroad construction), looking north. Bard Rock and its pavilion are seen jutting into the river, background on the right. (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt N.H.S., Hyde Park, N.Y.).

similar to a "Grecian Pavilion, roofed with a dome," described by Wharton as located on the plateau, above the escarpment on a "raised spot near the main walk."⁷⁴ This second structure seems to be the pavilion shown on a map of the property.⁷⁵ In this depiction it is located along the escarpment walk south of the house. This was the "main walk" to the river landing and probably the path Wharton took when he walked up the slope to the house on his arrival at Hyde Park. This pavilion was illustrated in A.J. Downing's book, *Landscape Gardening* (see Fig. 13).⁷⁶

Besides these nearly identical classical pavilions, there were at least two special garden features, the "Euterpe Knoll," which Wharton sketched (see Fig. 12), and the "L'isle des peuplier," which he described.⁷⁷ The "Euterpe Knoll" appears to have been located north of the house at the edge of the escarpment. At this point the path to Bard Rock breaks from the escarpment walk and leads downhill into a ravine. Beside this path intersection, a knoll juts out. Here was placed a "tasteful 'vase' of colossal proportions, dedicated to the god-

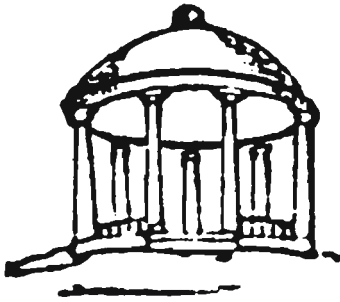


Fig. 13 The Pavilion (summer house) at Hyde Park, illustrated as Fig. 57, p. 385, in Andrew Jackson Downing's Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening (1st ed., 1841). Downing said that this was "a highly finished form of covered seat, which are occasionally introduced in splendid places where classic architecture prevails."

dess of 'Lyric Poesy'."⁷⁸ The 'Island of Poplars' ("L'isle des peuplier") is described by Wharton as "a grassy knoll covered with tall poplars [Lombardy Poplars], . . . with a bust on a pedestal."⁷⁹ The subject of the bust, and the location of this evocative feature, is not revealed but the composition is said to be "in imitation of Rousseau."⁸⁰ This is a reference to Jean Jacques Rousseau, the romantic philosopher who died in 1778 and was buried on a small island, his classical tomb ringed with slender poplars, in a picturesque lake in the landscape garden at Ermonville, outside Paris. Rousseau was the idol of romantics everywhere and this emblematic garden feature seems to reveal something of David Hosack's garden sentiments in the early 1830's.

Romantic sentiment heightened appreciation for Hyde Park. William Wilson, a New York nurseryman, visited Hyde Park in the summer of 1829 and stated, "the natural scenery along the whole [shore] line to the distance of about a quarter of a mile from the verge of the river, is highly picturesque, and in no direction can the eye be turned through this romantic situation, without the mind's eye being impressed with the strongest emotions of reverence of the great Creator."⁸¹ This comment portrays landscape gardening experienced at spiritual levels and also attests that natural themes and expressions dominated the visual experience at Hyde Park. One writer described the landscape garden as a "rural paradise,"⁸² while another called it a "terrestrial paradise."⁸³

David Hosack was an ambitious and successful American patron of the fine art of landscape gardening and, as A.J. Downing stated, Hyde Park served as "one of the most instructive seats in this

country.”⁸⁴ In reaching this conclusion, Downing described Hyde Park as follows:

Nature has indeed done much for this place, as the grounds are finely varied, beautifully watered by a lively stream [Crum Elbow Creek], and the views from the neighborhood of the house itself, including as they do the noble Hudson, and the superb wooded valley which stretches away until bounded at the horizon by the distant summits of the blue Catskills [sic], are unrivalled in picturesque beauty. But the efforts of art are not unworthy [of] so rare a locality; and while the native woods and beautiful undulating grounds are preserved in their original state, the pleasure grounds, roads, walks, drives, and new plantations, have been laid out in so tasteful a manner as to heighten the charms of nature. Large and costly hot-houses were erected, and elegant entrance lodges at two points on the estate, a fine bridge over the stream, and numerous pavilions and seats commanding extensive prospects.

LATER HISTORY

When David Hosack died, at the end of 1835, his widow remained at Hyde Park. In 1837 she moved from the main house to the ‘Cottage’ that had been built for the McVickars in 1814. Later, under Mrs. Hosack, the ‘Cottage’ and 60 acres was subdivided from the main Hyde Park parcel. By the end of the 19th century subsequent owners developed the ‘Cottage’ into a distinct residential property called ‘Torham’.

In 1840, much of the remainder of Hyde Park was sold to the wealthy entrepreneur, John Jacob Astor, who then deeded it to his daughter, Dorothea, Mrs. Walter Langdon. It then passed to one of the Langdons’ sons, Walter Langdon Jr., who resided there until his death in 1894. A.J. Downing reported on the early post-Hosack period in 1841 when he stated that, “the place has lost something of the high keeping which it formerly evinced,”⁸⁵ this in response to the upkeep of Hosack’s heirs. By 1844, Downing concluded: “For a long time, this was the finest seat in America, but now there are many rivals to this claim.”⁸⁶

After 1835, Hyde Park was generally maintained as it was created without major alterations. Still, Hosack’s landscape garden inevitably changed. The main house burned in 1845 but was replaced on the same site with a similar classical structure. The railroad was laid out along the river in the late 1840’s. The garden’s features and effects were slowly dismantled or simplified. As old trees died, new plantings were added. In 1890, an informative account of the property was provided by the notable landscape architect Charles Eliot. He described Hyde Park as it had been created sixty years earlier, attesting

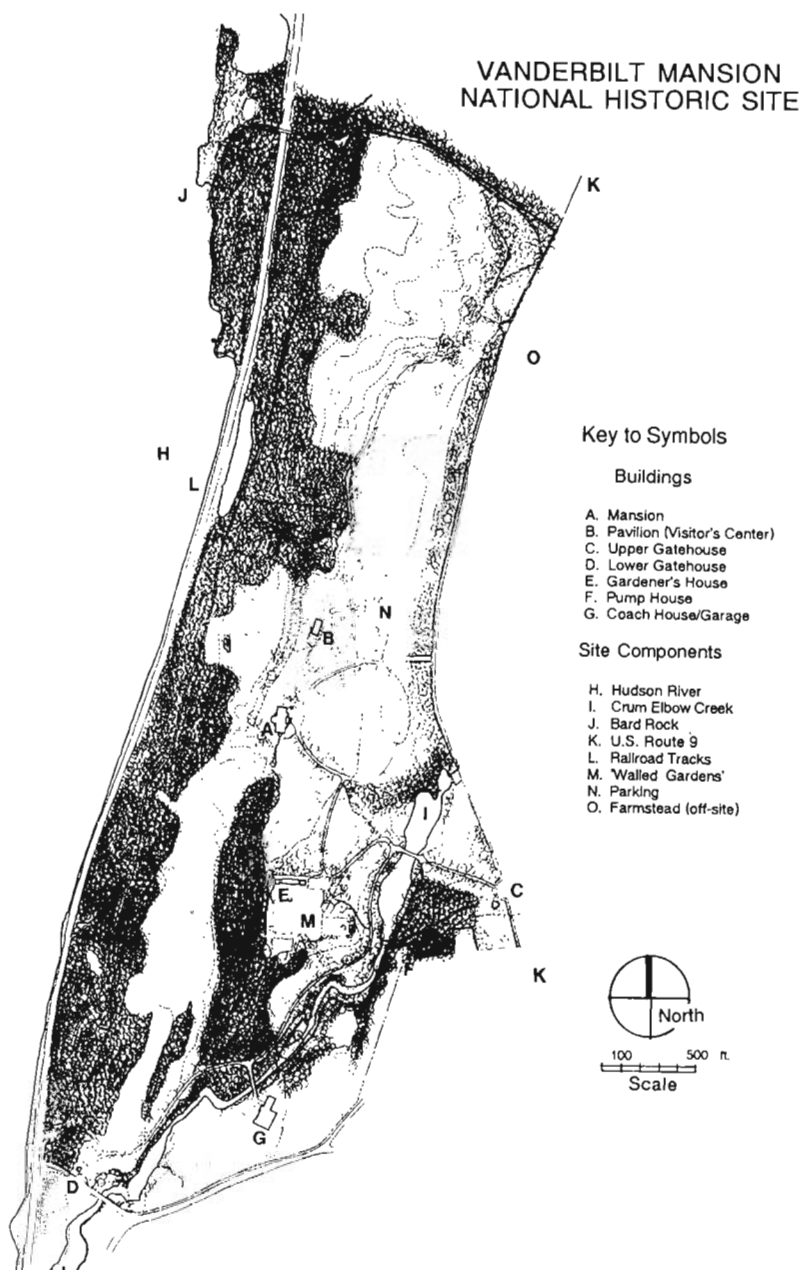


Fig. 14 Existing Conditions Plan (1988) by The Office of R.M. Toole. Original scale: 1"=100'. This drastically reduced plan is based on a map entitled "Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site," U.S. Dept. of the Interior, scale: 1"=200', five foot contour interval, 1946; with on-site observations and measurements (including vegetation survey) by R.M. Toole, Landscape Architect, February, 1988.

to the continued, sympathetic maintenance of the Langdon era. Attributing the work to Hosack and Parmentier, and referring to both, Eliot asserted that “no man ever undertook a more responsible service to the realm of taste applied to landscape, nor one in which it would have been easier to fail by spoiling what nature had so magnificently provided.”⁸⁷

In 1895, Hyde Park, “a scene not surpassed on the upper Hudson,”⁸⁸ was sold to Frederick W. Vanderbilt (a grandson of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt), and his wife Louise. The Vanderbilts built a new house (the fourth to occupy the site of Samuel Bard’s original), and replaced most of the outbuildings, adding a new coach house/garage complex and developing anew the ‘Walled Gardens’ (see Existing Conditions Plan, Fig. 14)⁸⁹. In 1905, Vanderbilt purchased the old Cottage parcel that had been a separate property since it was given to David Hosack’s widow after 1835. In this way, the park was again made a unified landscape extending to the 1812 north property line, a situation that had been interrupted for almost seventy years. Vanderbilt also removed scattered outbuildings and auxiliary development added since Hosack’s period. New plantings were added, but again the layout and spatial character of the property remained largely unchanged.

Following Frederick Vanderbilt’s death in 1938, the National Park Service acquired the site after President Franklin D. Roosevelt took a personal interest in its preservation (he felt the tree collection especially valuable). The property was opened to public visitations in 1940 as the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. □

Notes

1. Andrew Jackson Downing, *Trestise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America, with a View to the Improvement of Country Residences*, 1st ed., New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1841, p. 22. A.J. Downing was America’s most prominent, mid-19th century landscape gardener (landscape architect).

2. In addition to Hyde Park, other notable examples of Romantic period landscape gardening include: Sunnyside (Washington Irving’s home—1835-1859, administered by Historic Hudson Valley, Inc.) and Lyndhurst (initiated in the period 1838-1864, today a property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation), both in Tarrytown, N.Y.; Locust Grove (Samuel F.B. Morse’s home from 1847, now operated as the Young-Morse Historic Site), and Springside (Matthew Vassar’s home and A.J. Downing’s only extant landscape garden design, 1852, now being restored), both in Poughkeepsie; The Point (Hoyt House, 1852, now part of the Norrie-Mills New York State Park), at Staatsburg; also, Montgomery Place (in the period 1805-1860, Historic Hudson Valley property) at Annandale-on-Hudson; also, Clermont (period 1780-1813) and Olana (Frederic Church’s home from 1860), both New York State

Historic Sites located near Germantown, N.Y. As a group, these publicly held properties and several other historic, designed landscapes in the Hudson River Valley are considered to have national and even international significance.

3. Patrick Shirreff, "A Tour through North America, Together with a Comprehensive View of the Canadas and United States, As Adapted for Agricultural Emigration," *American Quarterly Review*, Vol. 18, March-June, 1835, p. 382.

4. Despite the general neglect of the Bard and Hosack eras at Hyde Park, several authors have over the years focused on the importance of the original work. See, for example: Helen Wilkinson Reynolds, "The Story of Hyde Park, Its Connection with the Medical Profession and the Science of Horticulture," *Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook*, Vol. 13, 1928, pp. 26-29. Also: Joel E. Spingarn, "Henry Winthrop Sargent and the Early History of Landscape Gardening and Ornamental Horticulture in Dutchess County, New York," *Year Book of the Dutchess County Historical Society*, Vol. 22, 1937, pp. 38-42.

5. Background information on John and Samuel Bard, see: John McVickar, *A Domestic Narrative of the Life of Samuel Bard, M.D., LL.D.*, New York: The Literary Rooms [Columbia College], 1822.; also, J. Brett Langstaff, *Doctor Bard at Hyde Park*, New York N.Y.: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1942.; also, Charles W. Snell, "History of 'Hyde Park' Estate, 1705-1894," *The Hyde Park Historian*, Hyde Park: The Hyde Park Historical Association, Vol. 24-33, December, 1955-September, 1958.1

6. Anna F. Perrin and Mary F.P. Meeker, "Quotations from: Allied Families of Purdy, Fauconnier, Archer, Perrin," 1911, not published, p.5.

7. Historians disagree on the first use of the name 'Hyde Park.' A local historian, Beatrice Fredriksen, in "Our Local Heritage, A Short History of the Town of Hyde Park," n.d., p. 7 states that the earliest reference to the name was in *New York Gazette*, March, 1735 in mention of "stones brought from Hide (sic) Park." Others, Perrin and Meeker, "Quotations," p. 5., claim Peter Fauconnier named 'Hyde-Park' in deference to his benefactor years before John Bard's ownership. But some, Henry T. Hackett, "The Hyde Park Patent, *Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook*, Vol. 24, 1939, p. 79, assert that the first recorded use was in 1768. Even at this later date the name has been in use for more than 200 years. In 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt (before his presidency a dedicated local historian), related in "A Broadside of 1768 About Hyde Park," *Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook*, Vol. 17, 1932, p. 81, that the name Hyde Park was "still applied by the present owner, Frederick W. Vanderbilt,"—If so, the site's current name (The Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site), applied by the National Park Service, seems arbitrary at best.

8. Charles W. Snell, "[Hyde Park] Land Acquisition Chronology," n.d., shows Lot #5 (215 acres) of the original Fauconnier property was sold to George Rim (or Rymph) in 1718. Also, Lot #2 (100 acres) is shown as sold to Anne Lazear prior to 1762. Also, see Henry T. Hackett, "The Hyde Park Patent," *D.C.H.S. Yearbook*, 1939. Hackett agrees that the Lazear parcel was sold before 1762, but lists the Rim (Rymph) sale as 1768.

9. See: Langstaff, *Doctor Bard at Hyde Park*, 1942. Langstaff describes John Bard as "formed when [Joseph] Addison and [Sir Richard] Steele were creating the new stoic ideal of an English gentleman," (p. 53). Both Addison and Steele were classical scholars and leading member of the 'Augustan School'. A love for country life, reflective of the Roman villas of classical times (as revealed on the 18th century 'grand tour'), was a central theme of the Augustans ideal. For background on landscape gardening in this context, see: John Dixon Hunt, *Garden and Grove: The Italian Renaissance Garden in the English Imagination.*, London: A. Zwemmer Ltd., 1986.

10. There are several Colonial period sites that can be studied, including: Van Cortlandt Manor, Croton, N.Y., first developed before 1700 and today a well preserved historic museum property operated by Historic Hudson Valley, Inc. Philipse Manor, Yonkers, N.Y., is today a New York State Historic Site on a diminutive urban site, but its early landscape layout is well documented. The original Livingston manor at the mouth of the Roeliff Jansen Kill, in Columbia County, was developed in 1699 as a functional manor house that has not survived. The later Livingston manor, originally called 'Claremont,' built in 1730, is today the Clermont State Historic Site. While today's site is maintained as it appeared in the early 20th century, the property does preserve remnants of the earlier siting and landscape layout characteristic of its Colonial period origins.

11. "Advertisement for Land Sale," May 12, 1768, New York.

12. Untitled Map, n.d. (c. 1763-1772), National Park Service file, Hyde Park, N.Y.

13. Letter: Samuel Bard to John Bard, April 1, 1764.

14. For a good description of the interplay of scenery and landscape gardening in the Hudson River Valley, see Raymond J. O'Brien, *American Sublime, Landscape and Scenery of the Lower Hudson Valley*, New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1981, pp. 103-126.

15. John McVickar, *A Narrative.*, 1822, p. 167 and 209.

16. Langstaff, *Doctor Bard at Hyde Park*, 1942, p. 80.

17. For a clear description of the English landscape garden tradition see: David Jacques, *Georgian Gardens*, Portland OR.: Timber Press, 1984; also, John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis, eds., *The Genius of the Place—The English Landscape Garden 1620-1820*, London: Paul Elek, 1975.

18. Jacques, *Georgian Gardens*, p. 102.

19. Letter: Samuel Bard to John Bard, April 1, 1764.

20. Letter: Samuel Bard to Polly (Mary Bard), March 24, 1766.

21. Letter: Samuel Bard to John Bard, April 1, 1764.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Anonymous, "Country Seats near New York," *New England Farmer*, Sept. 4 and Oct. 2, 1829, as quoted in Feins, p. 5.

24. James Thacher, "An Excursion on the Hudson," *New England Farmer*, Nov. 26 and Dec. 3, 1830, as quoted in Feins, p. 7.

25. William Wilson, "Notice of the Gardens at Albany and of Dr. Hosack's Estate, Hyde-Park," *The New York Farmer and Horticultural Repository*, June, 1829.

26. The lot north of the landing as sold to Nathaniel Pendleton who was married to Samuel Bard's sister, Susan.

27. Philip Hone, *Diary*, Sept. 17, 1829. When John McVickar was the rector of St. James Episcopal Church (erected across the turnpike on land donated by Samuel Bard in 1811), the 'Cottage' served as the rectory.

28. Thomas K. Wharton, *Journal*, July 9, 1832.

29. Wilson, "Notice. . .," *New England Farmer*, 1829.

30. A.J. Downing, *Landscape Gardening*, 1841, p. 22.

31. Background information on David Hosack, see: Christine C. Robbins, *David Hosack, Citizen of New York*, Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1964; also, Claire K. Feins, "Doctor David Hosack at Hyde Park," *Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site*, 1950, not published.

32. Letter: John Pintard to Eliza Pintard Davidson, Sept. 10, 1829, from *Letters from John Pintard to His Daughter, 1816-1833*, Dorothy C. Barck, ed., New York: New York Historical Society, 1941, Vol. III (1828-1831), p. 95.

33. Talbot Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America*, New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1944, p. 140 (see also f.n. #31).

34. Christine C. Robbins, "David Hosack's Herbarium and its Linnaean Specimens," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 104, No. 3, June, 1960, pp. 293-313. Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus (1707-78) pioneered the modern approach to botanical nomenclature. Hosack's herbarium was a valuable collection, said by Robbins to be "the only substantial number of Linnaean specimens ever brought to the United States." The collection was lost, probably in a fire, in the 1860's.

35. Langstaff, *Dr. Bard at Hyde Park*, 1942, p. 277; also, for background, see: Clair Klein, "Columbia and the Elgin Garden," *Columbia University Quarterly*, Vol. 31, 1939, pp. 272-297.

36. Letter: David Hosack to James Thacher, Jan. 1, 1829, as quoted in Feins, p. 2.

37. A.J. Downing, *Landscape Gardening*, 2nd ed., 1844, p. 48.

38. Thomas K. Wharton, *Journal*, (n.p.), 1832. Thomas Wharton was a young English artist invited to Hyde Park by David Hosack to complete a series of drawings of the property.

39. For a discussion of international Romanticism see: Hugh Honour, *Romanticism*, New York, N.Y.: Penguin, 1979. For background on the Romantic period in America and in the Hudson River Valley, see: Hans Huth, *Nature and the American*, Berkeley, CA.: University Press, 1957, Chap. 3, "The Romantic period." For a discussion of the design implications, see: A.J. Downing, *Landscape Gardening*, 2nd ed., 1844, Section II, "Beauties and Principles of the Art." For a contemporary review of these issues, see: Walter L. Creese, *The Crowning of the American Landscape*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985.

40. A.J. Downing, *Landscape Gardening*, 1st ed., 1841 and 2nd ed., 1844. In the 1st edition, Downing reported on a half dozen properties, the most extensive treatment being of Hyde Park. All but one of the examples Downing cited are located in the Hudson River Valley. In the much expanded 2nd edition, five properties in the Boston and Philadelphia areas are discussed first. Then Downing says that "There is no part of the Union where the taste in Landscape Gardening is so far advanced, as on the middle portion of the Hudson," and follows this with discussion of more than a dozen examples in the Valley, starting with Hyde Park. An engraved illustration showing the view northwest (similar to Fig. 9) was also included in Downing's account. See also: U.P. Hedrick, *A History of Horticulture in America to 1860*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950, pp. 186-211, and J.E. Spingarn, "Henry Winthrop Sargent and the Early History of Landscape Gardening in Dutchess County, New York," *D.C.H.S. Yearbook*, 1937.

41. Robbins, "Doctor Hosack's Herbarium. . ." p. 298, f.n. #25. Hosack married Catherine Warner in 1790. She died in 1796 without surviving children. Hosack and his second wife, Mary Eddy, had nine children in their twenty-seven year marriage (1797-1824). A year after her death, Hosack married Mrs. Coster.

42. Letter: John Pintard to Eliza Pintard Davidson, Sept. 10, 1829.

43. "J.T. Hackett Map," inscribed: "Drawn from Map of Property at Hyde-Park Belonging to Dr. Hosack, filed Oct 6, 1849," (as found, N.P.S. file, Hyde Park). The authorship of this map is unknown from available documentation. Some later annotations seem to have been added to the 1849 (?) depiction. Still, the layout of roads, buildings and features is thought to be reflective of the late Hosack period (see Fig. 10).

44. For background information on André Parmentier see: C. Stuart Gager, "The First 'Botanic' Garden in Brooklyn," *Brooklyn Botanic Garden Record*, Vol. XI, No. 4, Oct. 1922, pp. 115-118., also: C. Stuart Gager, "The First 'Botanic' Garden in Brooklyn:

Supplementary Notes," *Brooklyn Botanic Garden Record*, Vol. XII, No. 4., Oct. 1923, pp. 119-125, also: Henry G. Bayer, "A Short Biography of André Parmentier," New York: The Parmentier-Bayer Centenary Commission, 1925, Sarah E. Stetson, "André Parmentier—Little Known Pioneer in American Landscape Architecture," *Landscape Architecture*, Vol. 39, No. 4., July, 1949, pp. 184-186, Ann Leighton, *American Gardens of the Nineteenth Century*, Amherst, MA.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987, pp. 123-132.

45. A.J. Downing, *Landscape Gardening*, 1st ed. (1841), p. 21. Also, 4th ed. (1849), pp. 40-41. Parmentier published nursery catalogues in 1826 and 1828 wherein he claimed to have "laid out several landscape gardens in this country." This work included at least one other place on the Hudson River, Robert Underhill's estate at Croton Point. Downing said Parmentier "was constantly applied to for plans for laying out the grounds of country seats, . . . in the immediate proximity of New York," and also "in the Southern States; and two or three places in Upper Canada, especially near Montreal."

46. Since the mid-18th century, English landscape and garden design theorists had defined the natural style more or less as Parmentier would reiterate it a half century later. See: James D. Kornwolf, "The Picturesque in the American Garden and Landscape before 1800," *British and American Gardens in the Eighteenth Century*, Williamsburg, VA.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1984, pp. 93-106. Also: Therese O'Malley, "Landscape Gardening in the Early National Period," *Views and Visions, American Landscape before 1830*, Washington, D.C.: The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1986, pp. 133-160.

47. Downing, *Landscape Gardening*, (1841), p. 21-22. Downing, speaking generally, explained that Parmentier "not only surveyed the demesne to be improved, but furnished the plants and trees necessary to carry out the design."

48. Other individuals who might have influenced the landscape design include David Hosack's brother, Alexander, and several daughters. Also, Hosack's head gardener, E. Sayers, is said by Robbins (*David Hosack, Citizen of New York*, p. 178), to have practiced as a landscape gardener, after Hosack's death in 1835, at "various gardens and pleasure grounds in the vicinity of New York and in northern New Jersey."

49. Thacher, "An Excursion . . .," 1830.

50. Harriet Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travel*, (3 vols.), London: 1838. Vol. I, pp. 73-80, recording her visit in 1834, also, Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, (2 vols.), New York: 1837 (4th ed.). Vol. I, p. 309, as quoted in Feins, p. 13.

51. Letter: David Hosack to William Bard, March 7, 1829.

52. Philip Hone, *Diary*, Sept. 17, 1829.

53. Wharton, *Journal*, July 9, 1832; also, Talbot Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture* . . . p. 260.

54. Charles A. Murray, *Travels in North America During the Years 1834, 1835 and 1836*, (2 Vols.), New York: Harpers and Brothers, 1839, Vol. 2, p. 230.

55. James Thacher, "An Excursion on the Hudson," *New England Farmer*, Nov. 26-Dec. 3, 1830.

56. The Vanderbilt gatehouse is located on the south side of the entrance while Hosack's was apparently on the north. Also, the road down to Crum Elbow Creek curved slightly towards the north before turning back to the bridge. Today, this section of the drive is a straight alignment dropping abruptly to a later bridge.

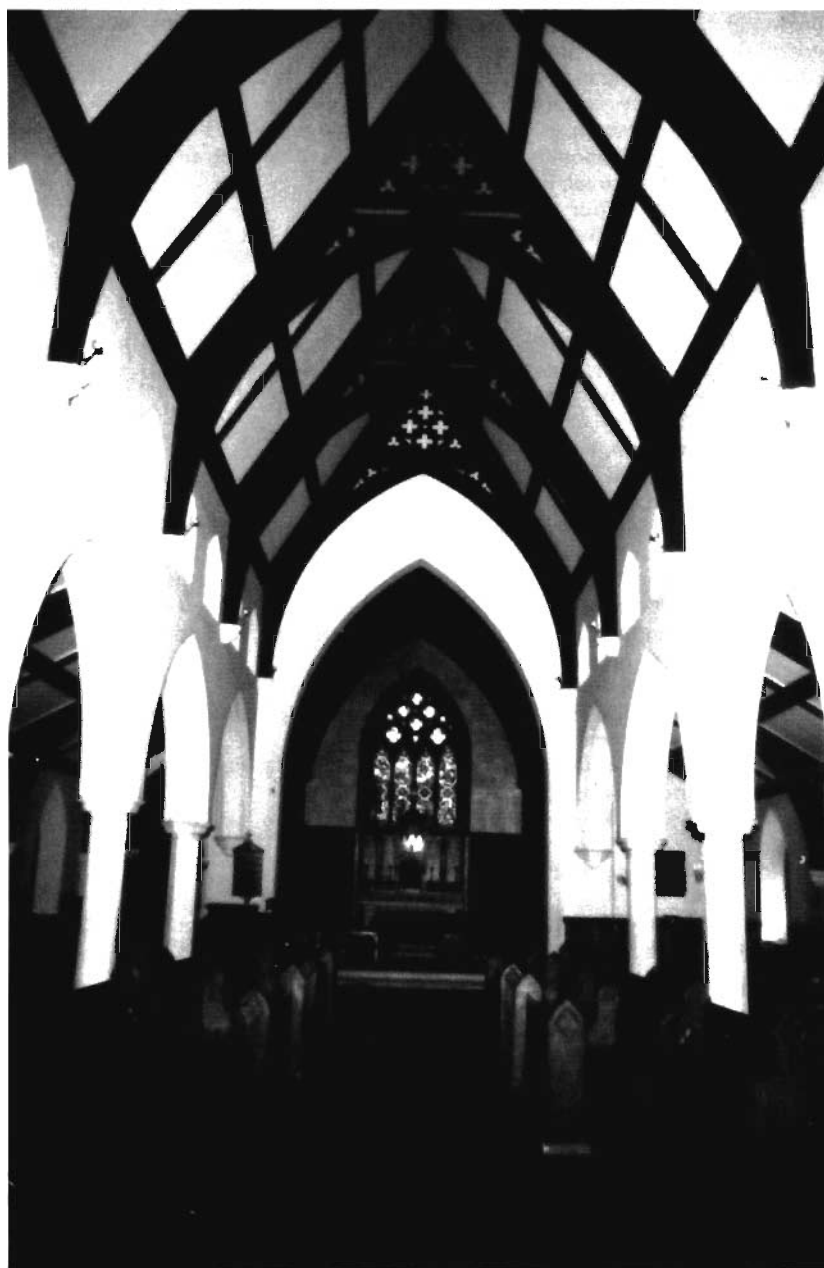
57. Shirreff, "A Tour . . ." 1835, p. 384.

58. Murray, *Travels* . . . p. 230.

59. The terms "Natural" and "Modern" are used by Downing to describe this style. The new approach drive at Hyde Park (1829) was undertaken thirty years

before similar landscape design at Central Park, New York City (1858) and two years earlier than Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts (1831). Both are considered pioneering examples of their type. On the other hand, landscape design layouts in this style, on private residential properties, like Hyde Park, can be documented as common by the turn of the 19th century. This earlier work was, however, seldom as elaborate as the new approach drive at Hyde Park.

60. Wharton, *Journal*, July 12, 1832.
61. Shirreff, "A Tour . . ." 1835, p. 383.
62. Anonymous, *New England Farmer*, Sept. 4 and Oct. 2, 1829.
63. Thacher, "An Excursion . . ." 1830.
64. Wharton, *Journal*, July 15, 1832.
65. *Ibid.*, July 9, 1832.
66. Martineau, *Retrospect* . . . (1838) and *Society* . . . (1837), as quoted in Feins, p. 13.
67. Downing, *Landscape Gardening*, 2nd ed., 1844, p. 413.
68. Thacher, "An Excursion . . ." 1830.
69. *Ibid.*
70. Wharton, *Journal*, July, 1832.
71. Letter: David Hosack to Judge Jesse Buel, Jan., 1831, as quoted in Robbins, p. 184.
72. A 1797 map (Jacob Smith Map, "Town of Clinton"), identifies "Dr. Samuel Bard's Store" at Bard Rock, suggesting that the area remained a wharf at that date. Henry T. Hackett, "The Hyde Park Patent," 1939, p. 37, states that the Bard Rock "store house and other [utility] buildings were said to have been torn down by Dr. David Hosack," indicating that Hosack made the ornamental improvements there.
73. Wharton, *Journal*, July 10, 1832.
74. Wharton, *Journal*, July 10, 1832.
75. Hackett Map, 1849 (?) It is not clear if the depiction (a rough circle) was included on the original map or added later.
76. Downing, *Landscape Gardening*, 1841, p. 394, Fig. 75.
77. Wharton, *Journal*, July 10, 1832.
78. *Ibid.*, n.d., The urn/pedestal feature appears to have been at least fifteen feet high.
79. *Ibid.*, July 10, 1832.
80. *Ibid.*
81. Wilson, "Notice of the Gardens . . ." June, 1829, as quoted in Snell, Vol. 28, May, 1957.
82. Thacher, "An Excursion . . ." 1830.
83. Anonymous, *New England Farmer*, 1829.
84. Downing, *Landscape Gardening*, 1841, p. 22.
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*, 2nd ed., 1844, p. 35.
87. Charles Eliot, "Some Old American Country-Seats—VI Hyde Park," *Garden and Forest*, May 7, 1890, p. 223. Charles Eliot (1859-1897) was a leading Boston landscape architect at the end of the 19th century.
88. *Ibid.*
89. Existing Conditions Plan (scale 1"=100'), by R.M. Toole, Landscape Architect, 1988. The illustration included here (Fig. 15), is a drastically reduced version of this original. Period Reconstruction Plans, Figs. 7 and 10, are based on the Existing Conditions Plan.



*Ralph Adams Cram's firm was responsible for redecorating the interior of the Bard Chapel.
(S. Bainwell)*

Fig. 1 John Bard, 1716-1799, from an original oil painting. (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt N.H.S., Hyde Park, N.Y.).

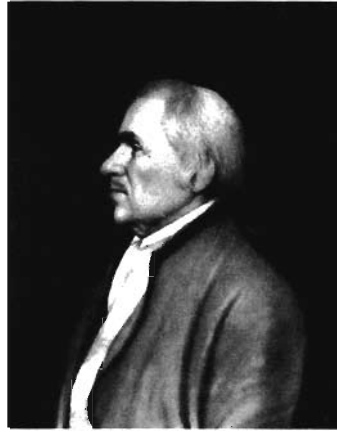


Fig. 2 Samuel Bard, 1742-1821, from an original oil painting. (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt N.H.S., Hyde Park, N.Y.).



Fig. 3 David Hosack, 1769-1835, from an engraving. (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt N.H.S., Hyde Park, N.Y.).
