



Image via Montgomery Place <http://american-arcadia.hudsonvalley.org/content/friend-muse1>

Name: Alexander Jackson Downing

Years: October 31, 1815 – July 28, 1852

Residence: Newburgh, NY

Biography: Andrew Jackson Downing was born in Newburgh in 1815 and is regarded as one of the pioneers in American landscape architecture and design. An avid horticulturist, Downing's father was an expert nurseryman and this propelled Downing toward the study of botany. Downing is credited for his designing and landscaping of the White House, United

States Capitol, and the Smithsonian Institute. Downing was a staunch advocate of public parks and for an appreciation of the natural environment in a period of rapid, industrialized change. Downing was also greatly influenced by English horticulturalist and author, J.C. Loudon. Downing would go on to write *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America*, his first book, written in 1841. Downing would later meet the young student, Calvert Vaux, subsequently partnering and designing landscapes for estates in the Hudson River Valley and environs. Later, Downing, Vaux, and Frederick Law Olmstead would begin discussions on a design for Central Park in Manhattan to feature a zoo, gardens, art galleries, science museum, and other features. Downing died in 1852 as a result of a paddle boat accident en route to Newburgh with his family. Olmstead and Vaux would continue designs for Central Park which came to fruition in 1857.

Accomplishments: Downing is well regarded as a pioneer in American landscape architecture and for his advocacy of large urban parks, laying the groundwork for plans for Central Park in New York with the aid of Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmstead.

For additional information: <http://www.fredericklawolmsted.com/ajdowning.htm>

Resources: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Andrew-Jackson-Downing>