

H. W. S. CLEVELAND

Pioneer Landscape Architect to the Upper Midwest

William H. Tishler and Virginia S. Luckhardt

THE EXTENSIVE NETWORK of public open space in the Twin Cities adds immeasurably to the quality of life in Minneapolis and St. Paul and is considered one of America's finest metropolitan park systems. This remarkable physical achievement is the realization of the bold plans of Horace William Shaler Cleveland, a visionary 19th-century landscape architect who, according to one prominent landscape historian, was instrumental "in pushing the frontier of landscape architecture and civic improvement into the West."¹

Born into an early New England maritime family, H. W. S. Cleveland first ventured into the Midwest in 1835 when at the age of 21 he spent three months working in central Illinois as a land surveyor. At that time the region was still a vast, virtually unsettled frontier, and he later wrote that the sites of St. Paul and Minneapolis "could not then have been reached in safety by a white man except by steamboat or with an armed escort." He returned to the East on horseback

and after a period of extensive travel purchased a farm in New Jersey to pursue a more secure life in agriculture. There his work with the New Jersey Horticultural Society, which he founded, launched his career in landscape architecture. When Cleveland returned to New England in 1854, his subsequent professional practice with his partner Robert Morris Copeland included laying out cemeteries, public squares, pleasure grounds, farms, and gardens.²

After the Civil War he worked briefly for Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux on plans for Prospect Park in Brooklyn. Olmsted, who was already known for his pioneering work in New York City's Central Park, and Cleveland had tremendous respect for each other's professional ability and a deep and lasting friendship developed. Here Cleveland undoubtedly became aware of Olmsted and Vaux's innovative subdivision layout for Riverside, Illinois. Sparked by booming development in the Midwest and probably influenced by his early impressions of the area's great

¹ Theodora Kimball Hubbard, "H.W.S. Cleveland: An American Pioneer in Landscape Architecture and City Planning," in *Landscape Architecture*, 20:92 (January, 1930).

The authors are grateful to Professor Arnold Alanen for his comments and suggestions on this manuscript.

² H. W. S. Cleveland, *The Aesthetic Development of the United Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis*, 10 (Minneapolis, 1888); Hubbard, in *Landscape Architecture*, 20:94.

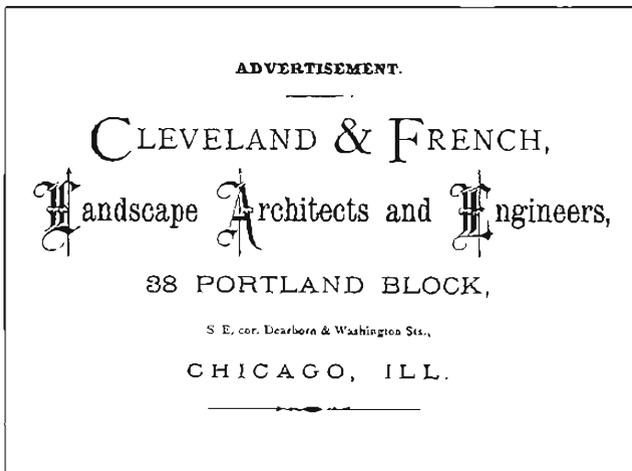
William Tishler, professor of landscape architecture at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, has had a long-standing interest in the work of Cleveland.

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future from his journey there more than 30 years earlier. Cleveland decided to move west. Thus, in 1869, he established a landscape architectural firm in Chicago, seeking new and more exciting professional challenges in that young and dynamic city.³

It was there that Cleveland, with missionary zeal, worked to extend the frontier of landscape architectural practice into America's heartland. As a transplanted Easterner he provided an important link between the Midwest, where he was to spend the rest of his life, and the landscape tradition of the Atlantic region that extended from the pioneer A. J. Downing, to Olmsted and his disciple, Charles Eliot. A highly respected and prolific writer as well as an engaging speaker, Cleveland appealed for orderly development of the land. He set forth his philosophies of planning and design in a variety of pamphlets and articles and in a remarkably perceptive publication, *Landscape Architecture as Applied to the Wants of the West*. In this small book he stressed the landscape architect's social role and responsibility in the newly developing region, where homesteading activity and the efforts of railroad companies and speculators stamped, with mechanical regularity, the gridiron plan upon the land.⁴

By 1871 he had formed a loose partnership with civil engineer William M. R. French, and his active practice extended into Minnesota and Wisconsin as



well as Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Indiana. The work of the partners assumed important new dimensions and encompassed the design of cemeteries, suburban residential developments, vacation resorts, parks, university grounds, and sites for several newly built state capitol buildings.

Yet, Cleveland's Chicago years were not personally satisfying. His wife became chronically ill; another blow was the loss of most of his library and valuable

papers, consumed by the great Chicago fire of 1871. (The city had rejected Cleveland's suggestion to reconstruct the old prefire grid pattern by using a more imaginative system of wide streets and boulevards.) The depression of 1873 hurt his business, and his work for the city in the South Parks District had ended in litigation. As a cruel climax, the death of his oldest son in the summer of 1880 left Cleveland and his ailing wife the responsibility of caring for two granddaughters. His close friend Olmsted concluded that Chicago had treated him poorly. Indeed, if the city had heeded Cleveland's planning recommendations, Chicago might have been spared "much of the confusion and congestion that eventually required Daniel Burnham's comprehensive replanning scheme of 1907 and 1908."⁵

Thus, as early as 1881, although he again had as much work as he could handle, Cleveland pondered the possibility of moving. He first considered returning to his native New England, then toyed with the idea of living in Virginia, but finally settled upon Minneapolis. Perhaps the fact that his son's family lived there and that there was the prospect of sufficient work in the area were deciding factors. Ironic as it might seem, when he finally left Chicago in the spring of 1886 to take up his new abode in Minneapolis, this 72-year-old man was not moving into retirement, but into a major professional triumph.⁶

CLEVELAND'S WORK in Minneapolis and St. Paul had actually begun 14 years earlier in 1872, when he was invited to lecture in the Twin Cities. This came about at the request of Dr. William Watts Folwell, first president of the University of Minnesota. According to the *St. Paul Pioneer*, Cleveland, "one of the most distinguished landscape architects in the country," was asked to deliver the final address in a lecture series replacing President Folwell, who had been called to Washington, D.C., to attend an agricultural conference. The subject of his address was "The Application of Landscape Architecture to the Wants of the West." It was so warmly accepted that members of the St.

³ Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture*, 289, 310 (Cambridge, Mass., 1971).

⁴ H. W. S. Cleveland, *Landscape Architecture As Applied to the Wants of the West*, Roy Lubove, ed., ix, x (Pittsburgh, 1965).

⁵ Cleveland to W. W. Folwell, April 21, 1881, May 25, 1885, in William Watts Folwell and Family Papers, Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), St. Paul; Cleveland to Olmsted, Sr., February 16, 1886, in Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Mark L. Peisch, *The Chicago School of Architecture: Early Followers of Sullivan and Wright*, 87 (New York, 1964).

⁶ Cleveland to Olmsted, February 12, August 5, 1881, Olmsted Papers.

Paul Chamber of Commerce asked that he repeat it in their city the following evening.⁷

A synopsis of the lecture appeared in the *St. Paul Pioneer*. It indicated that the speaker had pointed out the problems Chicago was facing because of its blind acceptance of a gridiron town plan that did not provide breathing space in the central city. "Chicago," he stated, "was preparing to spend millions of dollars in constructing a series of parks . . . [connected] by avenues or boulevards." Yet "the nearest park will be 4 1/2 miles from the Court House and all are now on the prairie, beyond the city limits" where "the poor laboring classes will reap no benefits from them." He went on to urge St. Paul officials to consider carefully their natural terrain and to plan accordingly before the city duplicated Chicago's dilemma. He emphasized that "If the intended site of a city is characterized by hills and valleys, or is in the vicinity of a lake, every effort should be made to preserve the picturesque effects." He argued that such measures would be profitable as well as attractive, citing the rapid rise of real estate values around Central Park in New York City. Cleveland clearly recognized the challenges of future growth facing the area. Development in and around the Twin Cities was relatively new, and there was still time to implement creative planning concepts for urban form and open space.⁸

At the lecture's conclusion, former governor and university regent General Henry H. Sibley, who was to assume an active role in promoting St. Paul's parks, introduced a motion to give the landscape architect a special vote of thanks. Cleveland was elated over the cordial acceptance of his lectures and later reported to Olmsted that "people *can be* interested and *warmly* interested in the art of landscape architecture, when its full scope and capacity is laid out before them."⁹

Other positive reactions occurred almost immediately. Cleveland was commissioned to lay out a portion of the grounds for the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, the St. Paul Cemetery, the Bishop Henry B. Whipple Faribault school sites, and Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis. The St. Paul Chamber of

Commerce also voted to "wait upon Prof. Cleveland and ascertain upon what terms he will suggest . . . an outline plan" for city improvements. Even the state legislature recognized the need for preserving open space in its rapidly growing state capital, and on February 29, 1872, authorized the "purchase [of] not less than five nor more than 650 acres of land within a convenient distance of the city of St. Paul" for a public park. After some months the present Como Park site was purchased.¹⁰

Cleveland returned to St. Paul in June, 1872, to work on his plans for the area and to address a joint meeting of the Common Council and the Chamber of Commerce. His message on "Public Parks, Radial Avenues, and Boulevards" began with an expression of great concern that the people of St. Paul might grow so familiar with their indigenous landscape that they could lose their perspective of its true magnificence. He indicated that Chicago was spending millions of dollars on parks, and when everything in human power was done to enhance these open spaces, they still would be tame and insipid in comparison to those which nature had furnished the St. Paul area without cost. "The primary object . . . in the designing of improvements," he maintained, "should be the preservation and development of . . . [natural] features in such a manner as to show a just appreciation of their innate . . . beauty. . . . A chief source of the future wealth, grandeur and attractive interest of the city and of the pride and affection of the future inhabitants will consist in the beauty of its situation, and every reasonable effort should be made to secure such arrangements of streets, avenues and public parks as will exhibit . . . [these] characteristics to the best advantage."¹¹

Cleveland took Summit Avenue in St. Paul as an example of the misuse of prime scenic land. This fine, broad street had already been lined with handsome villas that completely obliterated the magnificent bluff view. He urged the residents to save a small open area situated on the crown of the hill for its spectacular vistas. At a much later date his advice was heeded and today an attractive small park (Summit Outlook) graces a bend in Summit Avenue and affords a magnificent panorama of the river bluffs.

He also encouraged the city to retain the apex of Wabasha Street hill as a park area and possible site for a public building. All the arguments he used for preserving the Summit Avenue crown were applicable here, and the tract's close proximity to the business area made it more accessible "for refreshment and recreation after the labors of the day were over" for "the toiling multitude." This was another example of Cleveland's genuine concern for the humanitarian aspects of city planning. Today, the Minnesota State Capitol, designed by architect Cass Gilbert, stands on the Waba-

⁷ *St. Paul Pioneer*, February 9, 13, 16, 1872.

⁸ "Prof. Cleveland's Lecture. His Ideas on Landscape Gardening," in *St. Paul Pioneer*, February 17, 1872.

⁹ Cleveland to Olmsted, February 2, 26, 1872, reprinted in Karl Haglund, "Rural Tastes, Rectangular Ideas, and the Skirmishes of H.W.S. Cleveland," in *Landscape Architecture*, 66:69 (January, 1976).

¹⁰ *St. Paul Pioneer*, February 17, 20, 1872; C. C. Andrews, ed., *History of St. Paul, Minn.*, 526 (Syracuse, N.Y., 1890); Henry A. Castle, *History of St. Paul and Vicinity*, 1:372 (Chicago and New York, 1912).

¹¹ Here and two paragraphs below, see H. W. S. Cleveland, *Outline Plan of a Park System for the City of St. Paul*, 3, 4, 7 (St. Paul, 1885).

sha Street site with a wide greensward stretching out before it.

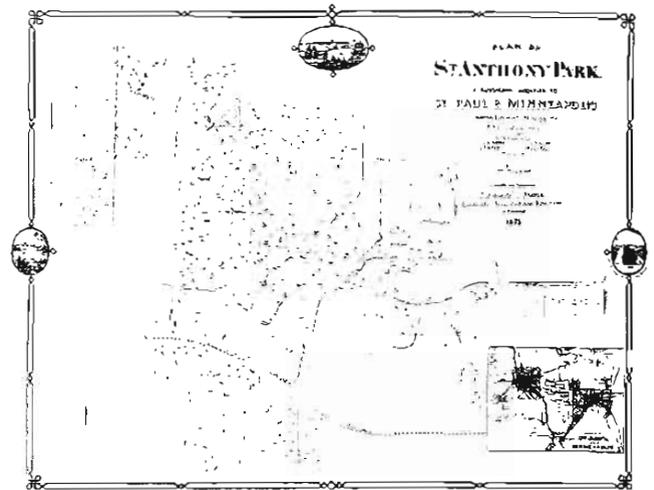
The citizens of St. Paul were praised for maintaining tiny Rice Park, which had been donated for a town square in 1849 by Henry M. Rice, one of Minnesota's first United States senators. Cleveland predicted that its current value was insignificant compared to its future importance when it would be surrounded by stately buildings among miles of city blocks. Again, his prophecy rang true. Today, Rice Park offers a small oasis of fine shade trees and comfortable seating. It is especially popular in the summer for evening concerts and as a space where city workers can relax over lunch.¹²

He suggested other inner-city areas suitable for small parks and encouraged the purchase of as much land as possible at current affordable prices. The city could then wait, he maintained, until its population stabilized before using funds for development. He was especially eager to acquire the steep and densely wooded Mississippi River bluffs to prevent their desecration. If marred by quarries, he feared, their picturesque quality would be destroyed and present an unsightly appearance from all parts of the city. He also proposed radial avenues and tree-lined boulevards plunging deep into the central city. These would serve not only as transportation corridors, but also would provide visual relief and act as fire barriers. "The most that I hope to accomplish," he said, "is to demonstrate the importance of seizing upon the prominent points, the preservation of which may add incalculably to the future beauty and grandeur of your city, and at the same time conduce to the health, happiness and daily comfort of the citizens."¹³

Near the outskirts of St. Paul, where greater acreage was available, he pointed out the need for large recreational areas and referred to Philadelphia's Fairmount Park when he encouraged the preservation of the Lake Como and Lake Phalen shore lines.

PERHAPS the most farsighted prediction in Cleveland's council address was for linking Minneapolis and St. Paul. This was his first, but certainly not his last, appeal for regional planning between the two rival cities. He pleaded for avenues radiating from the city center to Minneapolis, St. Anthony, Minnehaha, Fort Snelling, and Stillwater. He explained at length that "St. Paul and Minneapolis eventually, and at no distant day, will become virtually one city." He recognized the necessity for co-operation between the two if they were to evolve into a strong metropolitan unit — the "United Cities," as he preferred to call them.¹⁴

Former Governor William R. Marshall, who had sold a large share of the Como property to the city, also owned a tract of land midway between St. Paul and



CLEVELAND'S 1873 plan for St. Anthony Park, showing its topography and curvilinear streets

Minneapolis. Cleveland and French were retained to plat it as a suburb to be called St. Anthony Park. An 1873 plan exists that was submitted to the developers and signed by Cleveland. It portrays large lots for huge estates with curving drives. It also illustrates the concept of connecting parkways between the "United Cities," by proposing a great radial avenue running from Lake Como to Minneapolis. Unfortunately, the area was never quite developed according to the plan and the lots became greatly diminished in size. Most of the curvilinear streets in St. Anthony Park, however, at least reflect the spirit of the 1873 plan and the topography of the land.¹⁵

Since the entire sum allocated by the legislature for park development was spent to purchase the Como land, none of the many other improvements suggested by Cleveland in his 1872 speech could be implemented at that time. Yet, nearly all of Cleveland's proposals were to be realized at a later date.

In-depth information regarding Cleveland's work in the Twin Cities is disappointingly vague for almost a decade after 1873. The warm reception he received from his 1872 lectures in both St. Paul and Minneapolis, as well as the surge of demand for his consultation

¹² Jean Adams Ervin, *The Twin Cities Perceived: A Study in Words and Drawings*, 99 (Minneapolis, 1976).

¹³ Here and below, see Cleveland, *Outline Plan*, 8, 10, 11, 14.

¹⁴ Cleveland, *Outline Plan*, 13.

¹⁵ Theodore Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System, 1883-1944* (Minneapolis, 1945); *St. Paul Dispatch*, February 19, 1960; the original 1873 map is in Ramsey County Historical Society, St. Paul.

services immediately thereafter, make this time of quiescence difficult to explain. The best source of information for this period lies in Cleveland's personal correspondence with his Chicago partner, French, and with his new friend, William W. Folwell. These letters indicate Cleveland's discouragement with the Twin Cities' lack of action in acquiring land for parks. They also mention his valued acquaintance with Charles M. Loring, "who seemed a most estimable & agreeable man, and full of public spirit." Cleveland's evaluation of Loring was indeed perceptive, for both were destined to spend many years working together to develop the Minneapolis park system. Although Cleveland remained involved with work on the University of Minnesota campus and several land subdivisions, he turned to other parts of the country where there was a more immediate demand for his services. In 1881 he received a severe blow when his close friend and partner, French, became seriously ill, leaving Cleveland to shoulder the entire practice alone. Although the partnership never resumed, their friendship was lasting.¹⁶

THE YEAR 1883 proved to be one of positive action for the Minneapolis park system. Under the leadership of the Board of Trade, with flour milling executive George Pillsbury as president and former congressman Colonel W. S. King serving as secretary, the organization sponsored a resolution to secure a park act by legislative action. Regarding this proposal, Colonel King said "There has probably never been more important resolutions before this Board . . . now we can lay out a system of parks which will be the pride of the city for all time to come." The Board of Trade members, businessmen and landholders with large investments in the area, sought to "promote a high quality of life and insure the continued growth of the city." A strong park program seemed one appropriate way to help accomplish this aim.¹⁷

But there was heated opposition to the proposed system by both the city council, which was concerned about costs, and the Knights of Labor, who were concerned lest the parks serve only the affluent sector of society. Finally, however, the bill was presented to the legislature, which decided to submit it to a vote of



CHARLES M. LORING in the 1880s

the people. The park system proposal received a majority of the votes in the April public election, thanks to the steadfast support of the Minneapolis press. Both the *Morning Tribune* and the *Evening Journal* had been consistent in their efforts to help the park system cause.¹⁸

Later that month the city council relinquished the few public properties under its control to the reorganized Board of Park Commissioners, which then elected Loring president. Long an advocate of tree planting and boulevard improvement, Loring was a logical choice to direct the board. One of his first duties was "to engage the services of Mr. H. W. S. Cleveland, a well-known landscape architect of that time, to advise the Board in the planning of its work." Cleveland remained landscape architect for the city of Minneapolis until 1895.¹⁹

One of Cleveland's new responsibilities was to prepare a comprehensive report entitled "Suggestions for a System of Parks and Parkways for the City of Minneapolis." In opening comments, he addressed the recent political controversy, indicating that many who had opposed the park issue were not informed about similar park experiences in older areas of the United States and in European cities. He also emphasized the necessity of purchasing additional land for parks and parkways instead of providing large monetary outlays for immediate park land development. While condoning certain

¹⁶ Cleveland to French, October 26, 1881, in Harvard University archives, Cambridge, Mass.; Cleveland to Folwell, November 3, 1881.

¹⁷ Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 19; Michael N. Dana, "Horace William Shaler Cleveland: Pioneer Landscape Architect of Minnesota," 11, 22, Master's thesis, 1978, University of Minnesota, St. Paul.

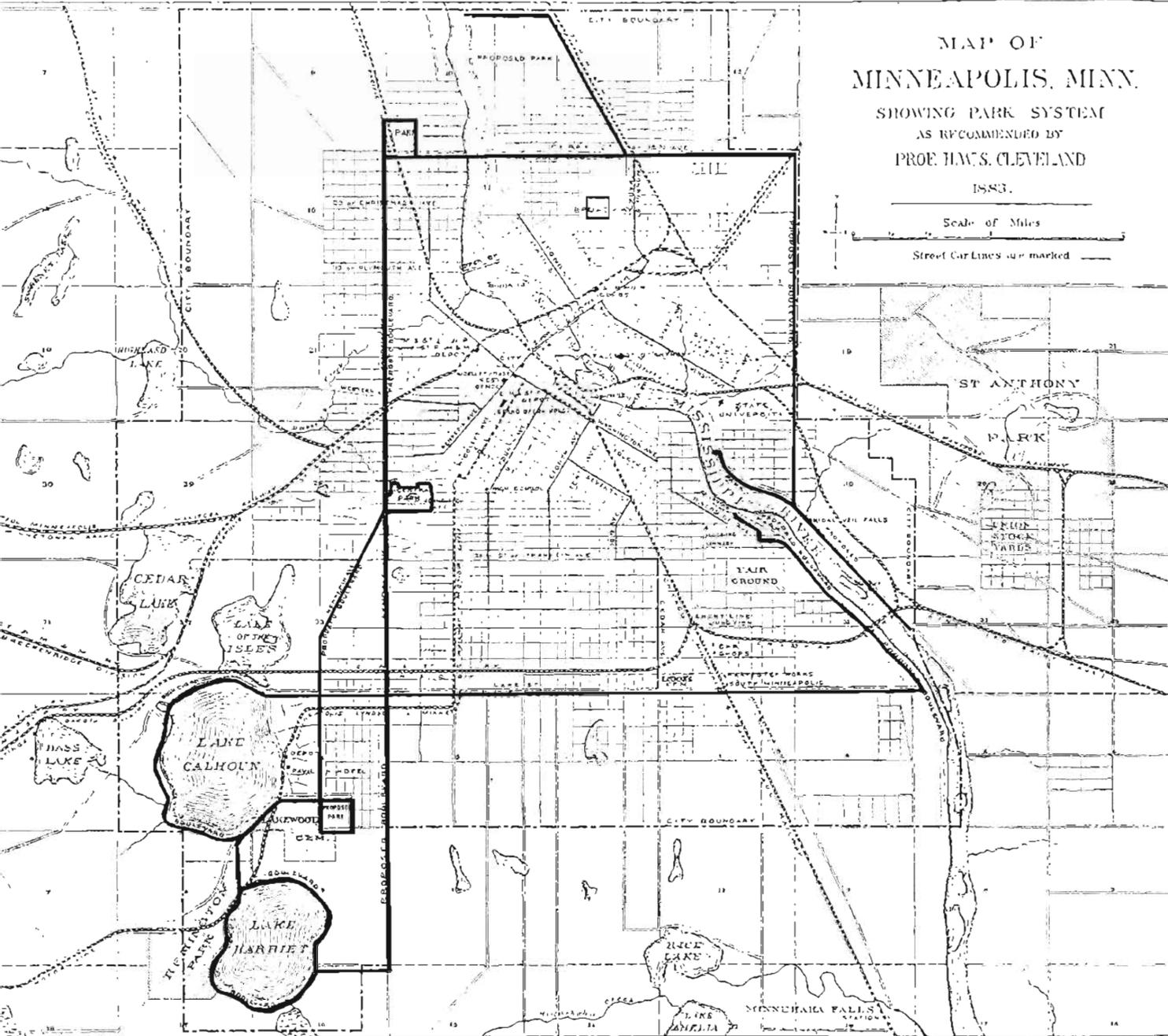
¹⁸ Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 21; *Minneapolis Journal*, January 31, April 4, 1883; *Minneapolis Tribune*, February 7, 1883; Minnesota, *Laws*, 1883, p. 404.

¹⁹ Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 26, 39; *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 25, 1875.

MAP OF
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

SHOWING PARK SYSTEM
AS RECOMMENDED BY
PROF. H.W.S. CLEVELAND
1883.

Scale of Miles
Street Car Lines are marked



improvements, he emphatically stated that others would be completely inconsistent with wise economy. He stressed that existing woodlands should be thinned for stand improvement and shade trees planted as soon as possible so that when the site was converted into a park, it would contain well-proportioned trees at or near maturity. But Cleveland adamantly opposed immediate "expenditure for ornamental gardening, and especially for artificial structures in the form of rustic buildings, bridges, grottoes, fountains, statues, vases, etc." It would be in poor taste, Cleveland

argued, to spend money on such superficial needs when there were more pressing ones, such as the purchase of park land, to be met. "When your parks are surrounded and your boulevards lined with costly residences and fine public buildings," he said, "the means will be forthcoming in abundance for such purchase of such artistic works as will then be appropriate to the situation."²⁰

²⁰ Cleveland, *Suggestions for a System of Parks and Parkways for the City of Minneapolis*, 3 (Minneapolis, 1883).

Cleveland expressed his strong “preference of an extended system of boulevards, or ornamental avenues, rather than a series of detached open areas or public squares.” The boulevards were seen as giving a unifying character to the over-all system and as imparting dignity and beauty to the city. Cleveland also knew that broad avenues planted with trees could serve as excellent barriers against the spread of fires, the impact of which he had personally experienced in both New York City and Chicago.²¹

He carefully pointed out that the area’s pristine ecosystem was like a two-edged sword. If the riverbanks and adjacent uplands were acquired, they would become an inestimable benefit to present and future inhabitants; if they were ignored, their slopes would be denuded of the trees essential for preventing soil erosion, the stone would probably be quarried, leaving ugly scars, and the area could become a disease-ridden slum — a source of misery to the indigents forced by necessity to live there.

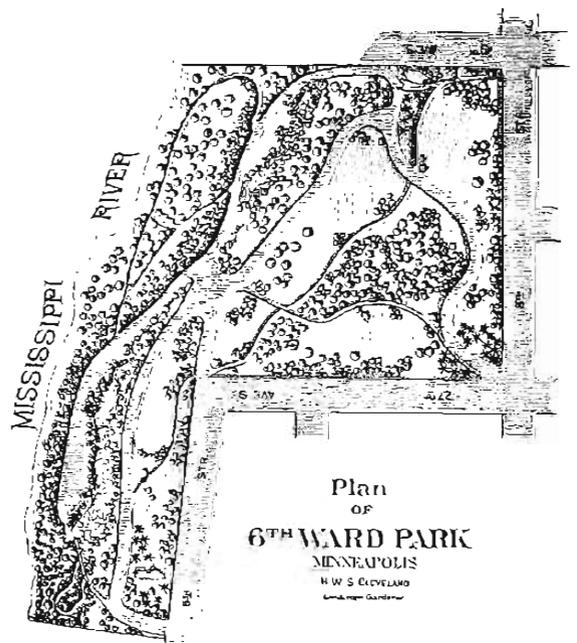
Finally, he set forth an urgent appeal for preserving the still unspoiled Mississippi River gorge, proposing a broad avenue on each side of the river, “to admit of views into the depths below, and reserve for public use every foot of land between the avenue and the water.” The Mississippi River system could then be connected with the lake region to the west by widening Lake Street into a broad 200-foot-wide ornamental avenue. The boulevard would continue around Lake Harriet, following the shore line wherever possible.²²

Cleveland summarized his long report by noting that his park system proposal comprised “more than twenty miles of parkways, completely encircling the central portions of the city. More than three-fourths of this distance would lie within two miles of the business center . . . and no part of it would lie more than four miles distant.”²³ His report set up priorities for the city of Minneapolis. The boulevards, small parks, lake shores, and banks of the Mississippi River were to be preserved and designed for the benefit of all before further large purchases of park land should be made. The new Board of Park Commissioners was eager to begin acquisition of the lake district and started negotiations to purchase Lake Harriet. It also began acquiring land for new parks, purchasing an area along the Mississippi River for Sixth Ward Park (now known as

Riverside Park), 30 acres of Central Park (later named Loring Park), 10 acres of First Ward Park (now Logan Park), and 21 acres of Prospect Park (now known as Farview Park). This added more than 80 acres of park land to the six acres it had received from the city council in small parks and squares.²⁴

IN THE FALL of 1883 Cleveland returned to Minneapolis. He was gratified to learn that the board was following his advice, by allocating a large share of its budget for the survey and acquisition of lands close to the city’s center. He was equally pleased to be asked to prepare a design for the newly acquired park land.²⁵ This work, presented to the commissioners at their first meeting in 1884, testifies to his expertise as a landscape designer and portrays his deep understanding of natural processes, his preference for using native vegetation, and his wish to preserve a site’s natural character whenever possible.

The following year the city was able to obtain a parks superintendent and hired Captain William



Morse Berry, a man who was faithfully and efficiently to execute his duties until 1905. Cleveland had worked with Berry in Chicago and knew that he was a man who would serve Minneapolis well.²⁶

In the spring of 1886 Cleveland changed his residence from Chicago to Minneapolis. Professionally, the move enabled him to become more closely involved with the newly formed park system. He was delighted when Olmsted wrote that he would visit the Twin Cities later that year while en route to California to study the site for Stanford University. He was espe-

²¹ Cleveland, *Suggestions*, 6. and *Aesthetic Development*, 10.

²² Cleveland, *Suggestions*, 7, 10.

²³ Cleveland, *Suggestions*, 11.

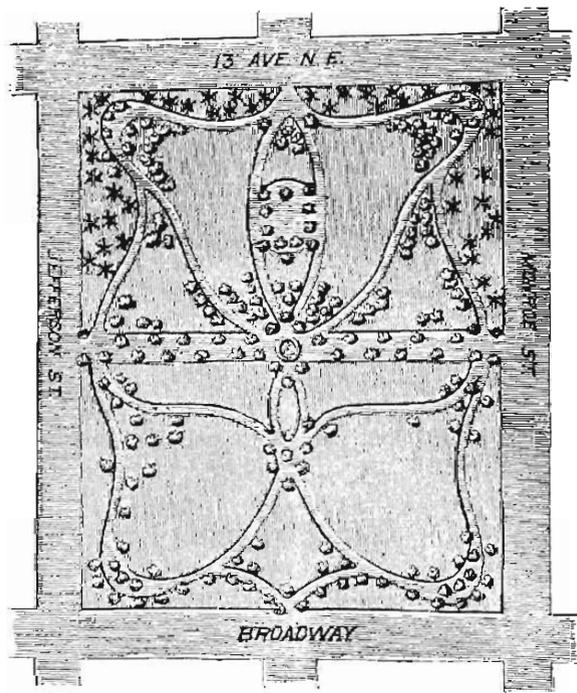
²⁴ Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 39.

²⁵ Cleveland to Folwell, January 2, 1884.

²⁶ Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Minneapolis, *Third Annual Report*, 10 (Minneapolis, 1886); Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 46.



LORING (formerly Central) Park as it looked in 1895 to Minneapolis photographer F. E. Haynes



PLAN OF FIRST WARD PARK.
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

cially eager for Olmsted to view some of the area's choice landscape features and submit his observations and recommendations to the commission. The day after Olmsted's visit, an extensive article appeared in the morning paper about the city's illustrious visitor.²⁷

Two months later Cleveland received Olmsted's report, which he then gave to Loring to be published and read before the next meeting of the park commissioners. Olmsted was optimistic about park acquisition and planning in Minneapolis because Cleveland was "so experienced and excellent a professional counselor."²⁸ On the whole it was an overwhelming endorsement of Cleveland's recommendations and professional abilities that could only raise his stature in the eyes of the commissioners.

DEVELOPMENT of the Minneapolis park system undoubtedly instigated similar action in St. Paul. Cleveland's second speech to the Common Council and Chamber of Commerce there was delivered in June,

²⁷ Cleveland to Olmsted, August 18, 26, 1886; *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 23, 1886.

²⁸ Board of Park Commissioners, *Fourth Annual Report*, 23 (Minneapolis, 1887).

1885. It had been 13 years since his initial lecture in that city, and it was time to renew and update his appeals for action. In his address, entitled "Parkways and Ornamental Parks, the Best System for St. Paul," he emphasized that the city's grand park land prospect lay in the wild and picturesque character of the Mississippi River banks. Second in importance was the development of ornamental public squares and small parks for pedestrians and the construction of broad boulevards connected to those in Minneapolis to form the bold and visionary concept of a united city. For the first grand connecting link between the two cities he proposed the name "Union Parkway."²⁹

After suggesting a few choice locations still available for park sites, he ended his speech with the following charge: "Nature has furnished . . . within the limits of the future city, such elements of grandeur and beauty as man might vainly strive to imitate; features of such picturesque character as would possess priceless value, could they be transferred to any of the old cities of the world . . . if you will but preserve them from the vandalism which is the inevitable companion of civilization."³⁰

Cleveland's words got no immediate response, but two years later, in February, 1887, the legislature finally approved an act creating a Board of Park Commissioners for St. Paul.³¹ Its responsibilities were clearly defined, and the St. Paul Common Council was authorized to issue bonds to finance park needs. By April the commissioners had Cleveland working for them, and in May he delivered an address that he entitled "Park Systems of the St. Paul and Minneapolis Area."

Beginning with his earliest lectures Cleveland had emphasized the importance of co-operation between the Twin Cities to further regional development. Yet his May speech, delivered in the Hall of Representatives at the state capitol, was the first in which he was privileged to address representatives of both cities simultaneously. He immediately emphasized the financial expediency of investing in land for parks, parkways, and boulevards. He stated that "the data furnished by the history of the park systems of all the chief cities of the country, which prove, beyond question, that however extravagant the outlay may have seemed at the inauguration of the work, it had been more than justified as a measure of financial policy by the result."

²⁹ Cleveland, *Parkways and Ornamental Parks. The Best System for St. Paul*, 27 (St. Paul, 1885).

³⁰ Cleveland, *Parkways*, 30.

³¹ Minnesota, *Laws*, 1887, p. 903; Castle, *St. Paul and Vicinity*, 1:372.

³² H. W. S. Cleveland, *Park Systems of St. Paul and Minneapolis*, 3 (St. Paul, 1887).

³³ Here and below, see Cleveland, *Park Systems*, 12, 19.

He renewed his appeal for small parks and for boulevards in areas destined to become congested with urban development. The parks would furnish "breathing spaces" where weary citizens could become refreshed, and the boulevards would add beauty, impressive grandeur, and fire protection. He encouraged the acquisition of land considered unsuited for residential property because of difficult topographical features such as steep or rocky terrain or swampland because it could be obtained more economically and with time and guidance be transformed into areas of beauty.³²

As with his proposals for Minneapolis, he encouraged the acquisition of land for larger parks outside of the densely populated districts. He used a sketch map of the Twin Cities to show their relative positions and the course of the Mississippi River between them, to encourage their interconnection by attractive wide boulevards. The linkage between St. Paul and Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis via Summit Avenue in St. Paul and 34th Street in Minneapolis, including lands around Powderhorn Lake, provided a perfect example of the type of intercity parkway system that Cleveland wanted to see developed. He had recommended this particular route long before but now feared it might be too late to acquire the land. There was still time, however, to lay out other "fine broad avenues and parkways . . . between St. Paul and Minneapolis . . . [which could eventually] form magnificent boulevards, great arteries of travel, and superb ornaments of the great metropolis."³³

As usual, Cleveland devoted the bulk of his speech to eulogizing the grand topographical "jewel" of the region, the Mississippi River and its picturesque natural shore line. He ended this important address expressing his own deep personal commitment: "I cannot hope to see more than the inauguration of the improvement I am urging. If I can feel that I have been in any degree instrumental in securing for the future city, which in my mind's eye I so plainly see spread out over these hills and valleys, — the inestimable boon which this possession will then be. I should deem it the crowning effort of my life, and that having achieved it, I had not lived in vain."

St. Paul's new Board of Park Commissioners made a good start during its first year. Work began on the long-neglected Como Park, and parcels of land were purchased for West St. Paul (now Cherokee), Indian Mounds, Hiawatha (now Hidden Falls) and Carpenter (Summit Outlook) parks. Cleveland realized the importance of persistence if a park system such as he visualized for the Twin Cities were to become a reality. He was willing to lecture on this theme whenever asked and addressed the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts on April 20, 1888. This lecture was probably instrumental in initiating action to purchase the land for a state park



THE FLOWER garden at Como Park about 1885, reproduced by the Erickson Stereoscopic Company, St. Paul

at Minnehaha Falls. Four months later Cleveland was officially retained, on a half-time basis, by the St. Paul Board of Park Commissioners "to prepare designs and plans for the improvement of the parks and parkways of the city, and to supervise all work thereon ordered by the board." For the next two years the board kept Cleveland busy providing proposals for river-bluff preservation, boulevard development, and the improvement of vacant squares and park land. He was especially active in the development of Como Park and the Summit Avenue boulevard.³⁴

BY MID-1891 the park commission in the capital city had become a political football. The legislature had dissolved the commission, but St. Paul's mayor set up a new one. As Cleveland ended his work in the city he seemed discouraged and disillusioned. At this time he was experiencing a steady decline in work. The year 1892 was the 10th anniversary of the Minneapolis Park Board, and he was still considered the board's landscape architect. At 78 he was beginning to grow physically frail. His most challenging work that year was his

proposal to the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota for a landscape plan of the campus. But jobs were indeed scarce. Whether it was his age or the beginning of the 1893 financial recession, Cleveland was having difficulty coping with his family's finances. He continued to manage as best he could, even making a trip to Chicago to see the fruits of his labor in the South Parks and to enjoy Olmsted's work for the Columbian Exposition.³⁵

His friend Folwell was forced to announce to the Park Commission in 1895 that "no further service can be expected of Mr. H.W.S. Cleveland, disabled as he is by infirmities incident to his advanced age." He went on to point out: "Our city may count itself fortunate to have had his assistance in the original development of

³⁴ Andrews, ed., *History of St. Paul*, 530, 531; Castle, *St. Paul and Vicinity*, 374.

³⁵ Cleveland to Regents of the University of Minnesota, February 20, 1892. University of Minnesota archives, Minneapolis; Cleveland to Olmsted, July 6, 1891. Olmsted Papers. The plan for the campus is in the University archives, along with Cleveland's recommendations.

park plans. . . . In some proper way his name should be perpetuated in connection with our park system." In October of that year Cleveland returned to Chicago.³⁶

In 1898 Loring visited Cleveland in Chicago and "found him, in his eighty-sixth [sic] year, the same genial, pleasant, unselfish character that I had known for so many years." Loring invited him to write a paper for the Park and Art Association convention to be held in Minneapolis. Although at first he declined, Cleveland quickly reconsidered and wrote his last paper, in which he stressed the social benefits of parks to all people, especially children and the confined inhabitants of large cities.³⁷

Cleveland died in Hinsdale, Illinois, on December 5, 1900, within a fortnight of his 86th birthday. He was buried in Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis, the city he had grown to love.

H. W. S. Cleveland's long, productive professional life spanned almost the entire last half of the 19th century. His work in Minneapolis and St. Paul became his crowning achievement. His astute suggestions and plans in the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s laid a firm foundation and provided futuristic projections for the cities' development. In subsequent years, others have augmented and expanded these proposals and added their own proficiency in implementing them, to develop one of the finest park systems in the country. The recent completion in Minneapolis of the Loring Greenway from the Nicollet Mall finished the "Grand Round," a



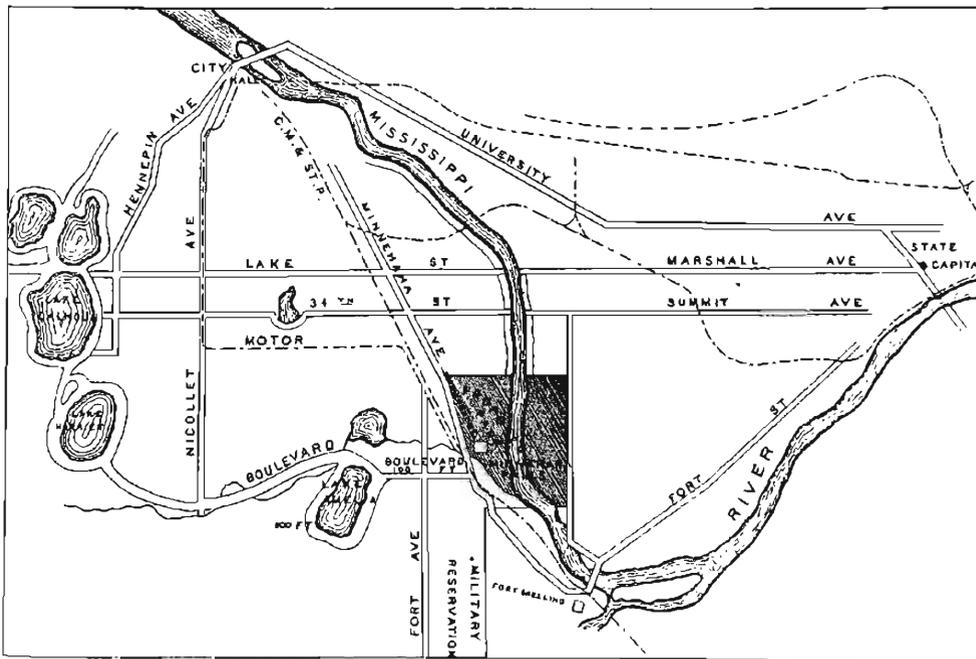
WILLIAM WATTS FOLWELL in the 1880s

park system initiated by Cleveland that completely encircles the inner city. Coupled with the preservation of most of the Mississippi River shore line, the last of Cleveland's great prophetic suggestions for the Twin Cities has been realized.

³⁶ Board of Park Commissioners, *Thirteenth Annual Report*, 25, 26 (Minneapolis, 1896).

³⁷ Here and below, see Cleveland, "Influence of Parks on the Character of Children," introduction by C. M. Loring, in *Second Report of the American Park and Outdoor Art Association*, 105, 106 (Minneapolis, 1898); Hubbard, in *Landscape Architecture*, 20:109; *Minneapolis Tribune*, October 18, 1948.

THE PICTURE on p. 281 is from Edmund J. and Horace G. Cleveland, *The Genealogy of the Cleveland and Cleveland Family*, 221 (Hartford, Conn., 1899); the plan on p. 284 is from the Ramsey County Historical Society, St. Paul; those on p. 286, 287, and 288 are in Theodore Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System*, 27, 42, 44; and that on p. 291 is from Cleveland's *Aesthetic Development of the United Cities*. All others are in the MHS audio-visual library.



PLAN for
the Grand Round,
1888



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