

Andrew Haswell Green

Selective Reading List

By Michael Miscione who is entirely responsible for the choices and all editorial comments. Revised 6-11-2008

BIOGRAPHICAL TREATMENTS (long-form, cradle-to-grave)

The Life and Public Services of Andrew Haswell Green, by John Foord (*Doubleday, Page & Company, 1913*). Long out of print, but available at research libraries and from old book dealers. It is also available for free reading, searching and download at www.google.com/books. This is Green's "official" biography. The author, who knew Green personally, gushes with unqualified praise for his subject on every page, and writes in a numbing, dated style. Still, this hagiography is packed with plenty of otherwise hard-to-find details.

The Public Career of Andrew Haswell Green, by George Alexander Mazaraki; an unpublished PhD dissertation (NYU, 1966). See below for how to obtain a copy; *Dissertation Express catalog # 6810032*. This is the roadmap for any serious Green researcher. It reconstructs his life story with objective sources and a historian's sensibility. The emphasis is on Green's Central Park work, his city planning, the comptroller years and the consolidation movement. Green's work with cultural institutions, conservation, and historic preservation is mentioned, but, sadly, not covered in depth.

CENTRAL PARK

The Park and the People: A History of Central Park, by Roy Rosenzweig & Elizabeth Blackmar (*Henry Holt and Company, 1992*). This work is rightly regarded by many as the definitive history of Central Park. Olmsted is treated as a mortal, and Green is correctly cast as a driving force in the creation and defense of the park, not a liability. And Green's work outside the park proper – the museums and the planning of northern Manhattan – is not ignored. A delight to read for laymen and researchers alike.

Country, Park & City: The Architecture and Life of Calvert Vaux, by Francis R. Kowsky (*Oxford University Press, 1998*). Green is, of course, just a supporting player in this splendidly written biography, but because their careers intersected often, even after Central Park, it includes many fresh Green tidbits.

CITY PLANNING

"Comprehensive Planning before the Comprehensive Plan," by David Hammack; a chapter in the book *Two Centuries of American Planning, Studies in History, Planning, and the Environment*, by Daniel Schaffer, Editor (*Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988*). Out of print, but available. Hammack is generally regarded as the foremost expert on Green's work. He gets extra credit for his precise, almost surgical, writing style. This essay makes a winning case that Green was Gotham's first comprehensive urban planner, even though most planning histories overlook him.

Capital City: New York City and the Men Behind America's Rise to Economic Dominance, 1860-1900, by Thomas Kessner (*Simon & Schuster, 2003*). Kessner presents, in one jaunty, layman-friendly chapter, a concise yet thorough snapshot of Green and his achievements, with an emphasis on his planning work. This is an excellent place to start if you are unfamiliar with Green.

Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape (Critical Perspectives on the Past), by David M. Scobey (*Temple University Press, 2002*). An ambitious study of the work and motives of the planners, proto-planners, speculators, boosters, real estate developers and politicians that designed and built nineteenth century New York City. Beach chair readers need not apply. Green stands out as a major player, to be sure, but he is often painted as petty and unremarkable – criticisms that deserve an airing, I suppose.

CONSOLIDATION OF GREATER NEW YORK

Power and Society: Greater New York at the Turn of the Century, by David C. Hammack (*Russell Sage Foundation, 1982*). Out of print, but not too hard to find. This tour de force is primarily an in-depth study of the social and political landscape of Gilded Age NYC, but it contains a chapter that is considered the definitive academic analysis of the consolidation of Greater New York.

A Study in the Politics of Metropolitanization; The Greater New York City Charter of 1897, by Barry Jerome Kaplan; an unpublished PhD dissertation (SUNY Buffalo, 1976). See below for how to obtain a copy; *Dissertation Express catalog # 7609068*. Despite the dreadful, off-putting title, this long-form chronicle of the consolidation movement is quite a worthy work, mostly because it includes, in detail, elements and events that Hammack omits or truncates.

NY PUBLIC LIBRARY (including mentions of the fight to save City Hall)

The New York Public Library: A History of Its Founding and Early Years, by Phyllis Dain (*The New York Public Library, Astor Lenox and Tilden Foundations, 1972*). The birth of the NYPL was a messy and little-known civic soap opera. This work tells the founding story with wider research and a modern candor that the Lydenberg book lacks. Both provide the context and back-story to the City Hall battle that divided Green against his fellow Tilden Trustees.

History of the New York Public Library: Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, by Harry Miller Lydenberg (*The New York Public Library, 1923; reprinted by Gregg Press, 1972*). Out of print, but available at research libraries and from used book dealers. This exhaustive – dare I say, exhausting – history of the NYPL and its forebear institutions is considered the classic in the field. It is a treasure trove of information, but it pulls its punches and suffers from a dated writing style.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION / CONSERVATION / AMERICAN SCENIC & HISTORIC PRESERVATION SOCIETY

"Historic Preservation, Public Memory, and the Making of Modern New York City," by Randall Mason; a chapter in the compilation *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States*, edited by Max Page and Randall Mason (*Routledge Press, 2003*). This essay is a welcome and long overdue reevaluation of Green's American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, New York's first formal historic preservation organization. It argues that the AS&HPS's work does not deserve to be overlooked or dismissed, as it often is, by today's students of the preservation movement. Mentions the effort to save City Hall.

The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940 (Historical Studies of Urban America), by Max Page (*University of Chicago Press, 2000*). This curiously themed book contains among its zigzagging topics a chapter that recounts Green's fight to preserve City Hall and his subsequent founding of the AS&HPS.

NEW YORK ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY / BRONX ZOO

Gathering of Animals: An Unconventional History of the New York Zoological Society, by William Bridges (*Harper & Row, 1974*). Out of print, but not too hard to find. Green puts in a fleeting – but essential – appearance before being entirely overshadowed by the fulltime zoo professionals that are the real objects of the author's interest. This book makes the list because it sheds a little light on this otherwise ignored chapter of Green's career.

A NOTE ABOUT DISSERTATIONS

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