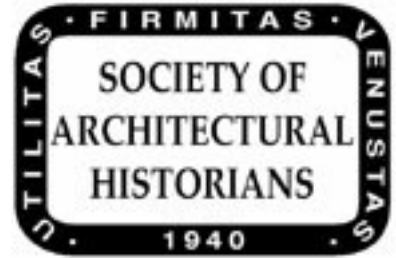




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# Cranbrook: The Invisible Landscape

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*As a study of the landscape of the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, this essay has three objectives: to make visible a previously unacknowledged landscape, to define its relationship to the image of Cranbrook as a whole, and to begin an exploration of the ways in which a landscape draws us into a bond of affection with it.*

*This study is the first to identify landscape designers at Cranbrook and to explore the importance of their design to the institution that was the most successful and long-lived of Arts and Crafts manifestations in America. It thus gives particular attention to the landscape ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement, as this was the last major aesthetic movement to value the art of landscape. Influenced by the principles of this movement, publisher George C. Booth founded Cranbrook in 1925, envisioning a combination school, studio, and art colony, where artists together could develop an integrated design practice. Under the influence of Arts and Crafts, landscape had a very early, critical role at Cranbrook and was part of the vision for the institution. But the later history of Cranbrook shows the decline of landscape as an art, a loss of scope and vision, especially as the Arts and Crafts aesthetic waned and that of the modern movement emerged. The study gives attention to this decline; the observation of how this happened at Cranbrook provides some clues as to the overall diminution of landscape in the twentieth century, a decline heretofore noted, but not explained.*

*The essay begins with the recollection of a personal experience that is critical to the author's interest in the Cranbrook site and to an understanding of the exploration of our connections to landscape. Visits to the site and the use of the resources of the Cranbrook Archives (the papers of George Booth, designs, plans, photographs, and writings by the Cranbrook landscape practitioners) have made it possible to give visibility to the Cranbrook landscape and to allow an assessment of the landscape's relationship to the larger institution.*

AT ONE POINT IN MY LIFE, Cranbrook, the art academy in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, served as a refuge, a place of respite.

I would like to thank the National Endowment for the Humanities for its Travel to Collections grant which enabled me to venture upon this study. Thanks also to Kevin Roche for reading an earlier draft; thanks as well to my colleagues William Cronin, Esther da Costa Meyer, and Margaret Morton for reading different stages of this text. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mark Coir, director of archives at Cranbrook Educational Community, and Gregory Wittkopp, curator of collections, Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, for help with sources; and to Joanne Rees, for editing. Finally I would like to thank Hillary Quarles, Elizabeth Holland, Mary Beth Kreiner, and Julie Fry for assisting me with the research and assembling of figures and footnotes.

It was a time of personal upheaval, and when I recollect the images of the Cranbrook landscape that I frequented—the hilly, forested section of the Cranbrook grounds, rather than its better-known formal courtyards—they are intimately connected with my remembrance of that time and place. Recalled and resurfacing in an unexpected and dramatic way at a friend's birthday party, these memories and images bear reexamination.

My first visit to Cranbrook came at a moment of anguish and uncertainty. Having just reached adulthood, I found myself at odds with what had resulted from the totality of the decisions I had made; they had set up a life I had not intentionally sought. But as I now look back upon this episode in my life, it gains another dimension: it has the general outline of a life crisis familiar to other human beings, so that its telling is of a recognizable experience rather than of just a personal story. Because it is marked by traits familiar to many, I have made my own experience a starting point and have endeavored to interweave it with the story of Cranbrook's landscape: in other words, to use the experience in common as a way of making the experience of the landscape understood.

In my first encounter with it, then, Cranbrook was both the site and focus of the writing and drawing I pursued in my search for another life. And while I do not know specifically why I went to Cranbrook at that time, I remember a sense of well-being attached to the time I spent there and a sense of it as a place that accommodated and allowed these activities. It remains for me a place that engages my affections, despite the anguish which still pervades the memories surrounding that moment in my life.

It was in thinking about this question of how such bonds are formed that I decided to write about Cranbrook. When we attempt to reconstruct the history of a landscape, we tell the story of who designed it and who commissioned the design: at times in our exploration we are able to uncover its aesthetic concepts and rules and the way in which the design developed. But very rarely do we deal with the reasons that we select a specific landscape for use or study. More rarely do we consider whether and how it gives us delight. In most writing about landscape, the unstated, unexplained assumption is that it has been selected because it is good, that is, aesthetically successful by the canon of its own times. When we write about landscapers, we also assume implicitly that they were chosen because of their ability to make

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something beautiful; discussion of landscapers is usually in terms of their importance to the history of landscape aesthetics alone. We rarely are told what, if any, connection there may be between the landscape's aesthetics and the attraction to and use of a landscape in one's life.

Rather, since the 1980s, aesthetic approaches have been questioned in landscape. Ecological concerns have led to the view that aesthetic issues are elitist conceptual structures, capriciously laid upon a site without any attention to its natural characteristics. Further, the obvious difficulty in explaining aesthetics has made the questions of delight and appeal in art arcane themes, although these, in fact, are fundamental reasons of being for the art of landscape and are the main forms of communication with its public. Thus, in the pages that follow, I have attempted to piece together a picture of how Cranbrook's landscape came to be designed. Because it was part of my life at a critical moment, unconsciously chosen as a release and refuge when I was not professionally interested in landscapes or knowledgeable about them, because the memory of it has survived as an experience of surprising intensity, it offers a particular opportunity for me to put together the lived experience of a landscape and the designer's interest in its aesthetics and history.

My objectives in this essay are, first, to make the hitherto unacknowledged and invisible landscape of Cranbrook visible; and second, to make explicit and understandable this landscape's aesthetic importance to the image and concept we have of the institution as a whole. Finally, a last objective is to make a modest start in the difficult area of how and why a landscape engages our affections and becomes a favored space in our everyday existence. This last is a dangerous minefield for any researcher, as delving into the area of feeling is often dismissed or considered only a gender issue. Yet this is not an exploration of the expression of feeling for a landscape. Rather, it is an examination of the elements that engage us and heighten our sense of being in a place.

Historical data, mainly from the Cranbrook Archives (in the form of plans, photographs, letters, Saarinen family home movies, and a few oral histories), have provided the means for reaching the first objective; the second is dependent on an assessment of this data; the last takes recourse to the personal experience of Cranbrook, previous but essential to a historical and professional interest in it.

George Booth, a newspaper publisher and the founder of the Detroit Arts and Crafts Society in 1906, created the Cranbrook Arts Academy as a vehicle for the Arts and Crafts movement. Booth hired artists from various fields to design and teach in the academy; all had an interest in the movement. The importance of the Arts and Crafts aesthetic at Cranbrook is outlined in the fiftieth anniversary, commemorative history of the academy published in 1983, which noted Arts and Crafts elements and characteristics in a detailed discussion of Cranbrook's architec-

ture, furniture, philosophy, teachers, and students. This volume had, however, a remarkable omission: neither the landscaping of the Cranbrook site nor landscape design itself as an object of Arts and Crafts influence was discussed at all. For me, this omission was particularly glaring, because of my initial attraction to Cranbrook through its landscape. But the omission was also historically unjustified. Arts and Crafts artists themselves considered landscape an important and indispensable part of a site's design. The importance that they accorded it has simply been ignored in subsequent histories of the movement as well as in the histories of Cranbrook.

Thus, my wish to make Cranbrook's landscape visible has both personal and historiographic dimensions. For the omission of Cranbrook's landscape from contemporary treatments reflects a teleological interpretation of the Arts and Crafts landscape by the modern movement. In fact, Cranbrook's landscape is particularly valuable because it was part of one of the last important manifestations of the Arts and Crafts philosophy: Cranbrook was the most successful and long-lived of the Arts and Crafts institutions in America. After the 1930s, the modern movement eclipsed Arts and Crafts, creating an ironic hegemony, as the modern itself had been shaped by Arts and Crafts ideas, forms, and philosophy. Its influence on the modern aesthetic suggests the generative role of the Arts and Crafts philosophy over time and the importance of recovering it historically.<sup>1</sup> Such a recuperation, moreover, is important to contemporary work. For the Arts and Crafts movement raises questions about industrialization that we are asking anew, specifically about the relation of the regional to larger units, national or international.

### *The plan*

"I happen to have two things," said Booth to the Finnish architect, Eliel Saarinen, in the spring of 1925. "First, I happen to have money, and second, I happen to have a great interest in art."<sup>2</sup> Saarinen had just finished teaching a term at the University of Michigan's School of Architecture in Ann Arbor, where Booth's son, Henry, was one of his students. Booth told Saarinen of his interest in founding a many-tiered art institution which would include a primary school, church, and art academy and where artists from a variety of disciplines would teach students by the example of their own work.<sup>3</sup> This institution would be Booth's second attempt to put into practice the ideas of the English Arts and Crafts movement. Inspired by William Morris and his circle's creative response to the processes of industrialization and mass

1. On this subject, architectural literature is extensive, and landscape literature is nearly nonexistent. Therefore, in a discussion of the Arts and Crafts elements that set the stage for the modern shaping of exterior space, I refer only to landscape.

2. Eliel Saarinen, "The Story of Cranbrook" (nd), "Cranbrook" (ca. 1950) Box 6-6, Accession number 1990-08, 13.

3. See Mark Coir, "George Gough Booth and the Planning of Cranbrook," unpublished manuscript (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1992).

production, Booth had organized an Arts and Crafts society in 1906, just north of the cradle of the American automobile industry, Detroit.

Although by the turn of the century there were several different European Arts and Crafts variants from which he might have drawn, in conceiving Cranbrook, Booth relied heavily on the English Arts and Crafts principles articulated by Morris and his circle. Booth took the name Cranbrook from his grandfather's native, medieval English village and emphasized the crafts of his metalsmith forebears. In his Detroit enclave, Booth attempted to enact three ideas of the English Arts and Crafts movement: an integration of art and religion;<sup>4</sup> an emphasis on the vernacular;<sup>5</sup> and a utilization of arts and crafts as part of daily life and work rather than as separate, professionalized endeavors.<sup>6</sup>

4. E. Boris, *Art & Labor: Ruskin, Morris and the Craftsman Ideal in America* (Philadelphia, 1986), 4–12. The importance of religion in the English movement came from the attempt to tie a Northern European aesthetic to a Christian ethic; it was conceived as a way to replace classicism, which was Southern European and based on a pagan religion. The religious impulse focused the movement's attention on the craft and art of the medieval Gothic cathedrals. The emphasis on a Christian, North European ethos was continued in Booth's vision. Christ Church was envisioned as a Gothic edifice and the cornerstone to the whole complex. Its commission was given to Bertram Goodhue, a Boston architect, active member of the Boston Arts and Crafts Society, and designer of many Gothic churches. Goodhue, however, died in 1924, before starting the design work, and Oscar Murray of Goodhue Associates (the successor firm) is credited with the design.

5. For the purposes of this article and in reference to landscape, though originally applied to architecture, I will use Brunskill's definition of vernacular. "'Vernacular'—the products of local craftsmen meeting simple functional requirements according to traditional plans and procedures and with the aid of local building material and constructional methods." Brunskill opposes this to "'polite'—the efforts of professional designers, meeting the more elaborate needs of a formal way of life with the aid of internationally accepted rules and procedures, advanced constructional techniques, and materials chosen for aesthetic effect rather than local availability." (R. W. Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture of the Lake Counties* [London, 1978], 15.) The English Arts and Crafts' emphasis on the vernacular, which evolved as a response to the lack of connection of industrial production to local roots, became the central tenet of the movement and its major limitation. An emphasis on the vernacular inspired the Arts and Crafts to fight against the homogeneity of industrial products and their separation from the region where they were produced. At the same time, however, this emphasis ultimately broke down the international movement into separate regional segments, weakening its influence and effect. The vernacular surfaced at Cranbrook through Booth's interest in local buildings, materials, and crafts. Regional plants, building materials, and building types were sought. Booth also selected professionals who were members of Arts and Crafts societies, who would be likely to choose vernacular buildings—for example, Michigan farm structures—as architectural models for Cranbrook.

6. J. B. Jackson, "Craftsman Style and Technostyle," *Via III: Ornament* (Philadelphia, 1977), 57–63. Jackson believes that the residential architecture of the Arts and Crafts movement reflects with great clarity contemporary attitudes towards the meaning of work. The dwellings recalled traditional manual occupations in their fascination with surface textures, plaster, or brick. These expressed the work of the traditional mason; but this expression was transformed into a factory-type environment in the dwellings of a later period. Following Jackson's idea, we see the landscape as farm representing traditional occupations on the land, the landscape being shaped by farmers and their manner of working on it.

The third, strongly domestic aspect of the movement—the integration of arts and crafts into daily living and working space—fit well with the American project: Cranbrook was a family enterprise. Booth, his wife, Ellen Scripps Booth, and their sons were involved directly in Cranbrook; they lived on the site, and the Booth house was part of the overall complex. The art academy was to attract various artists and provide studio space and living quarters for them and their families, so that all aspects of their lives would be integrated. During its development Eliel Saarinen and his entire family were involved in Cranbrook; his children were students in the academy, and he and his wife, Loja, taught there and worked on the design for several of its buildings and landscapes.

Although work had been done on the site for almost two decades, the earliest written record of a comprehensive plan defining Cranbrook dates to an exchange of letters in 1925 between Booth and Saarinen. In the letters, Booth outlined his vision of the academy. These letters eventually led to an agreement: Saarinen would help Booth develop a many-tiered educational institution consisting of a church, an elementary school, and boys' and girls' secondary schools.<sup>7</sup> Each component would be informed by art, which would also be the basis of learning. The entire complex was to be crowned by an art academy, which would gather a community of artists to work and instruct others by their example. Booth wrote:

Such an academy I contemplate would be based on architecture with all the allied and applied arts: painting, sculpture, decoration, *landscape design* and artistic craftsmanship as properly associated with buildings and *gardens*. In the ultimate development of the work it would include musical composition, drama, *horticulture* and all the fine and applied arts [emphasis added].<sup>8</sup>

Booth's statement established landscape design as a central part of its curriculum both as an art and a craft (horticulture). When Saarinen created the first concrete spatial vision of the campus, he expressed all these disciplines in a plan that included the boys' school, the artists' studios, and a lake, across from which, centrally located and axially dominating the composition, was a school for landscape and horticulture. The last was encompassed by a large greenhouse (Fig. 1). In the *built* plan, however, the school was dropped, even though it constituted a central element in the composition of 1925.

It is the absence of landscape from the curriculum, from the plan as built, and, curiously, from the later writing about the academy, that creates a sense of its invisibility. But there is a landscape at Cranbrook. If we look at the aerial view of Cranbrook (Fig. 2), we can see one landscape, the seam that binds all of

7. The boys' school was conceived mainly as a source of choirboys for Christ Church. Ellen Scripps Booth subsequently proposed a third set of buildings for a girls' school.

8. G. Booth to E. Saarinen, "An Academy of Art at Cranbrook," 1925, G. G. B. papers (1908–25), Box 2, Folder 4, Accession number 1981–1.

Fig. 1. Eliel Saarinen, School of Landscape Design and Horticulture with greenhouse, 1925 (AD 11.1). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

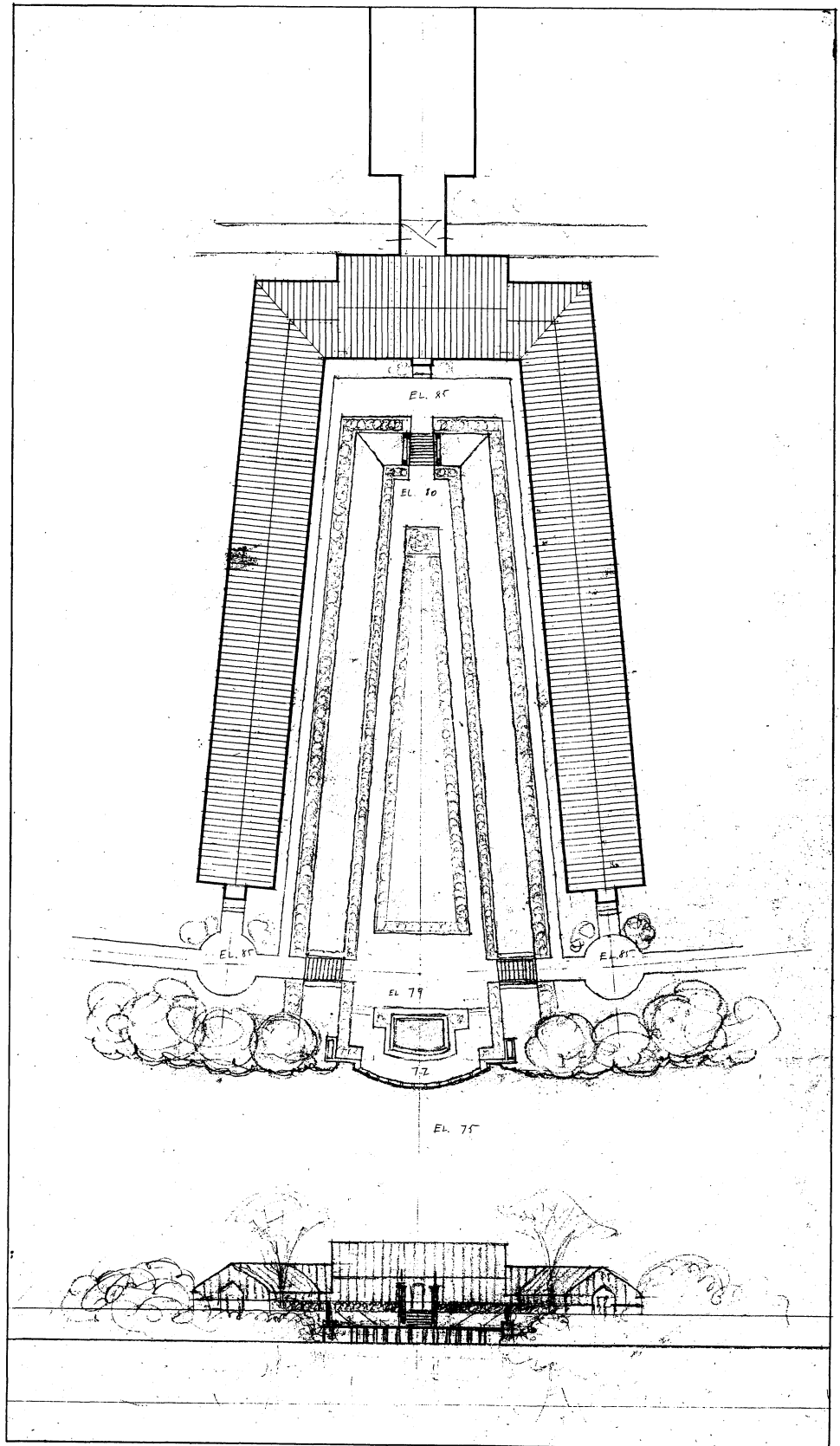




Fig. 2. The first landscape, aerial view from 1958 of Cranbrook Institute of Science, built 1930, with established tree cover (FD 82.44). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

Cranbrook's institutions into one cloth. This I shall call the first landscape. What I will call the second landscape of Cranbrook, one of courtyards and terraces, is visible in the second photograph (Fig. 3). Both the first and second landscapes were built in sections over time by different landscapers. The story of their birth and growth, their design and development, is the center of this discussion.

*The two landscapes of Cranbrook: the first landscape*

At Cranbrook, the landscape which transmuted farmland into a campus was formed in bits and pieces over time by three landscapers: H. J. Corfield, O. C. Simonds, and the firm of the Olmsted Brothers. All three worked on the site before the academy was formally started and Saarinen arrived. The first two shaped the land, built roads, and determined the character of the first landscape. Their decisions regarding the inclusion of rolling meadows, forests, and farm land in the landscape and their posture toward topography—whether to maintain, modify, or dramatically change—determined what we see today. But first there was Booth's farm landscape.

When Booth bought Cranbrook's land, it was a run-down farm, surrounded by other farms, mainly apple orchards. In keeping with the Arts and Crafts ideal of uniting art and labor, Booth saw Cranbrook as a working farm, but one also constructed with an aesthetic vision. The farm landscape, whose European forerunner, the eighteenth-century *ferme ornée*, or ornamental farm, was visited by Thomas Jefferson and given its first American translation in his Monticello, has been tied to American ideals and is a continuing icon of great power in the history of American landscape (in Cranbrook's time, Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin East was an important contemporary manifestation). It is a landscape that reflects both national and utopian ideals, though its importance in America has not been studied.<sup>9</sup> For Booth at Cranbrook, the farm landscape satisfied an Arts and Crafts interest in land used for labor, and its incorporation at the site was as a real and not recreational element. Booth thus wanted the farm to support itself. The efforts of the previous owners had been

9. See J. B. Jackson, *Landscapes: Selected Writings of J. B. Jackson*, ed. Ervin H. Zube (Amherst, Mass., 1970).



Fig. 3. The second landscape courtyards, academy of art, 1940 (5538.12). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

unsuccessful: the corn crops had been ruined by damp, the fish hatchery had been wiped out by floods, and the animals were so neglected that the chickens nested in the trees. Even the huge orchard of apples, pears, peaches, and grapes produced only enough pears to make \$100 per year and enough apples for the family to eat.

When Booth purchased the property in 1904, he replaced the tools and barns, hired a superintendent (a position that Corfield later occupied) and a farmer, and installed a silo, a blacksmith forge, a piggery, a manure shed, and a dairy. Albert Kahn also built a set of farm buildings on the Kingswood site in 1905.<sup>10</sup> New

10. The Booth house was designed in 1907 by Albert Kahn (1869–1942). Kahn was born and educated in Germany; he came to Detroit with his family in 1880 and created his own architecture firm in 1902. He is primarily known for his innovative, single-story, factory designs through which he revolutionized the manufacturing process. The Ford River Rouge Plant in Dearborn, Michigan is an example of his factory design. However, Kahn's modern vision did not extend to his institutional or domestic projects, such as the neoclassical Clements Library at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor or Booth's Arts and Crafts house.

farm buildings were designed by another local architect, Marcus Burrowes, as a farm complex around a courtyard.<sup>11</sup> In 1917, Booth added a sheep shed, a chicken house, and a cow hospital. Over the years, the farm became increasingly self-sufficient, producing such crops as oats, rye, and corn, that were used to feed the farm's livestock. Only in 1922 were the farm operations finally ended, partly due to the influence of Corfield.<sup>12</sup>

In the farm model for Cranbrook's landscape, Booth had followed the Arts and Crafts principles of using vernacular

11. Marcus Burrowes was born in 1874 near Buffalo, New York. He studied at the Denver Art Academy and was later involved with the Arts and Crafts movement in Detroit where he met Albert Kahn and George Booth. Renowned for his English Revival style of architecture, Burrowes designed over a thousand structures in the greater Detroit area; Jean M. Fox, *Marcus Burrowes (1874–1953) English Revival Architect* (Farmington Hills, Mich., 1992).

12. For information on the farm, see George Booth, "The Annals," parts one through four (1904–14), Accession number 1988–5; Henry Booth, "The History of Cranbrook," parts one through five (1904–25); and Arthur Pound, *The Only Thing Worth Finding: The Life and Legacies of George Gough Booth* (Detroit, 1964), 263–71.

buildings and landscapes. But Corfield's treatment of the land moved Cranbrook away from the vernacular landscape of the farm. Later, Saarinen moved matters further in his overhaul of the farm buildings, which Booth wanted to use for the boys' school, the first part of his educational institution.<sup>13</sup> Saarinen kept the original farmhouse on the land, which Albert Kahn had remodeled, but he tore down the complex of farm buildings, following in his own structures only Burrowes's footprint and replacing his predecessor's silo with an observation tower.

#### H. J. Corfield

"The bearer of this letter entered my services February 1, 1905 as landscape architect and gardener," wrote Booth of H. J. Corfield in 1915. "The work he undertook was the reclamation of a tract of land consisting of 225 acres and converting it from one of the roughest pieces of farm land possible into a country estate."<sup>14</sup> An early letter to Corfield indicates that Booth made the overall plans for the site, and it is also known that Booth and his son regularly supervised the garden planting.<sup>15</sup> But as the first landscaper of Cranbrook, the English-born Corfield was involved with the laying out of the roads, although it is difficult to document in the archives whether Corfield or O. C. Simonds did most of that work. Booth wrote that Corfield had "a marked ability in producing artistic landscape results."<sup>16</sup> But Corfield was not only a horticulturist. A letter to Booth, in which he acknowledged having inadvertently tossed out the plan for the flower garden, tells us that he had drawn plans for the plantings, although they are not now in the archives.<sup>17</sup>

After locating and grading the roads and establishing some plantings, Corfield left Cranbrook in 1905. But before Corfield's departure, the Vettrains, a large family of Italian immigrants, came to Cranbrook to work with him. Continuity in the subsequent work was achieved through this family, from which came Cranbrook's head gardener, Mike Vettrano, who worked there from 1905 to 1958.<sup>18</sup> Photos of Corfield with Mike Vettrano suggest the closer connection between design and labor (Fig. 4).<sup>19</sup>

Corfield returned to Cranbrook in 1908, just as Booth was moving into his newly finished house. Corfield laid out the

garden for the house, based on current ideas in this period. The gardens of Italian villas had been rediscovered through Charles Platt's *Italian Gardens* (1894) and through Edith Wharton's *Italian Villas and their Gardens* (1904), which had been popularly serialized in *House Beautiful*. While the terracing around the house had been designed by Burrowes, Corfield set the terrace's character with his plantings (Fig. 5).<sup>20</sup> Corfield was one of several professional landscapers working on the gardens of the grand houses of the East, where the ideas of Platt and Wharton were dominant. At Cranbrook, Corfield was to use all the features of the Lenox, Massachusetts garden he had designed for Newbold Morris.<sup>21</sup> In the subsequent landscaping of the site, the Italianate character of the garden would seem out of character with the whole. Yet Arts and Crafts ideas were applied also in some of these Italianate or classically laid-out gardens by applying its garden principles in this period in two layers: the design of a classical, architecturally shaped courtyard close to the house and a gradual movement toward an informal organization beyond. Pieces such as the Japanese garden, the brook, and the rustic pergola (designed by the French designer, Albert Charpaize) date from Corfield's time, and they give some sense of a change in character as the landscape receded from the vicinity of the house (Fig. 6).

Henry Booth remembered that when Corfield first began work, there were extensive discussions with his father about whether Cranbrook should be designed as a gentleman's estate for leisure or as a productive farm, with Corfield adamant that it could not be both.<sup>22</sup> In the gardens he designed for the Booth house and in the areas around them, Corfield made pleasure grounds out of farmland.

The change which Corfield wrought at Cranbrook, from a farm to an ornamental landscape, was an important watershed in the history of landscape design in America. The farm landscape certainly continued to be powerful; in 1935, in a parallel to Cranbrook's early vision, Frank Lloyd Wright created Taliesin East in Spring Green, Wisconsin. There, as at Cranbrook, despite the consideration of the farm landscape as an important icon or element, there were tensions about the nature of the landscape.<sup>23</sup>

20. Pound, *The Only Thing Worth Finding*, 270.

21. "I have been in Lenox sometime carrying out considerable work for Newbold Morris, one of New York's leading men. He has just built a beautiful residence here; to my mind, one of the prettiest houses I have seen since I have been in this country. . . I am carrying out what will be a fine Italian garden consisting of extensive terrace work: sunken garden, ice house, pergolas, fountains and sundial, an elaborate scheme" (Corfield to Booth, 25 June 1908, G. G. B. papers, Box 15, Folder 3, 1981-15).

22. A. Pound, *The Only Thing Worth Finding*, 267.

23. Frank Lloyd Wright's vision for Taliesin was that of a richly productive farm, very much like that sought by Booth as described in his annals. Wright's description in his autobiography is more poetic and visionary, Booth's more practical, but the aim for their landscapes were the same: "I saw the hill—crown back of the house as one mass of apple trees in bloom, perfume drifting down the Valley, later the boughs bending to the ground with red and white and yellow spheres that make the apple tree no less beautiful than the orange tree. I saw plum trees, fragrant drifts of snow—white in the spring, loaded in August with blue

13. This became known as the Cranbrook School for Boys.

14. Supplement to Booth office recommendation, 19 March 1915.

15. G. Booth to H. J. Corfield, 9 June 1908, G. G. B. papers, Box 15, Folder 3, Accession number 1981-15.

16. Booth office recommendation, 20 April 1908.

17. Corfield to Booth, 19 May 1910.

18. Michael Vettrano emigrated as a young man to Detroit, Michigan with his family in 1905. His whole family was hired by George Booth upon arrival, and he worked for Cranbrook until his death in 1958. Michael became head gardener and eventually superintendent of gardens and grounds. His son, Dominick Vettrano, succeeded him as superintendent and went on to serve for two years on the Bloomfield City Commission as mayor. Information on the Vettrains and relatives was gathered by Michael Nataluk for CAF from Walter Morante in 1988.

19. Annotated by Dominick Vettrano.

Fig. 4. Charles Booth (George Booth's brother), Mike Vettrano, and H. J. Corfield third, fourth, and fifth from left, with teamster and horses hired from Pontiac, Michigan, ca. 1906 (FD 122.3). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

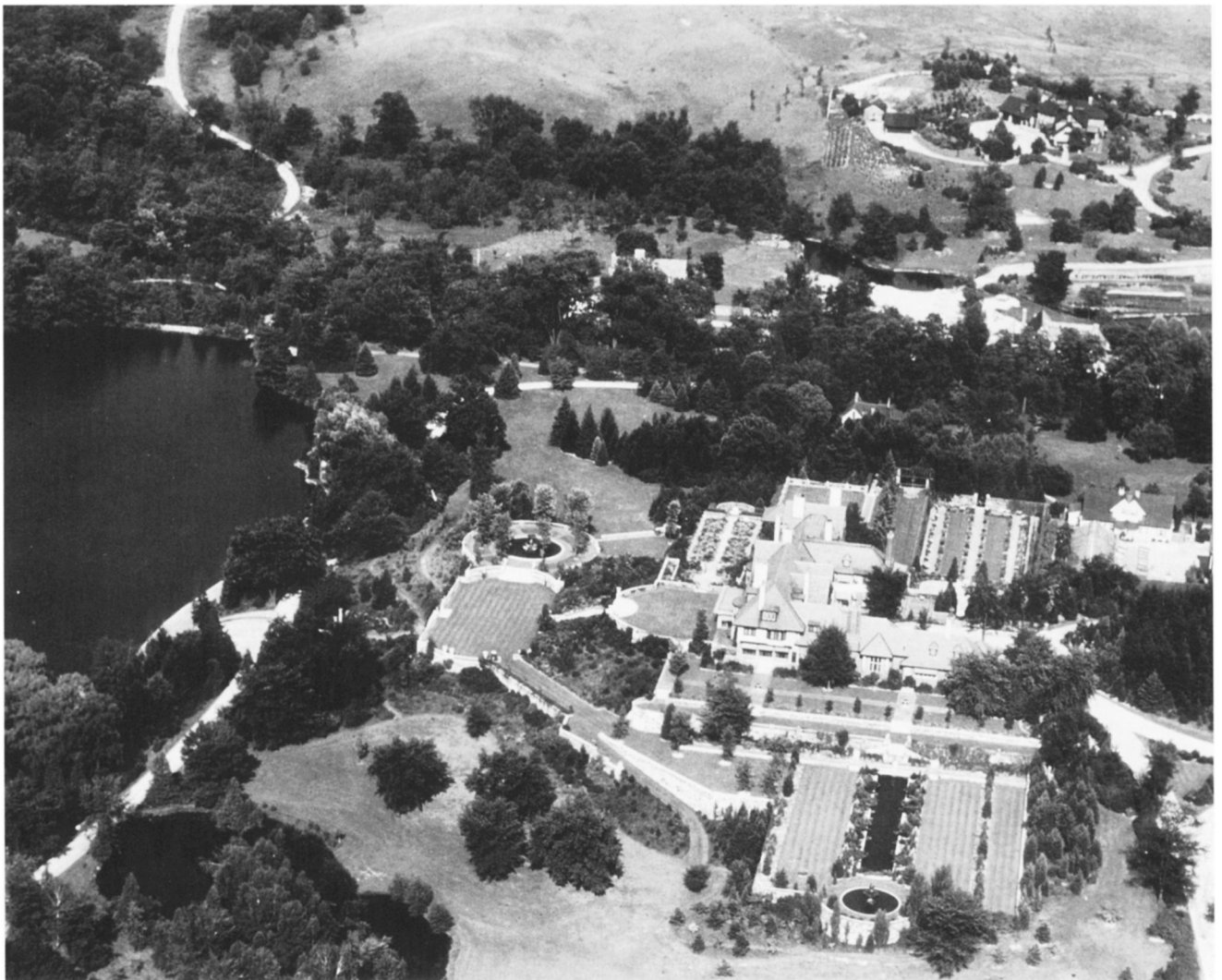


Fig. 5. The Booth house designed by Albert Kahn, terraces laid out by Marcus Burrowes, and landscaped by H. J. Corfield, 1908 (CEC 700). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)



Fig. 6. The landscape of the environs of the formal garden ca. 1906 (E 126). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

But while Wright established the fellowship, his teaching institution, he retained the land at Taliesen East as a farm. Despite Corfield's change in direction, a connection between the two places existed: after Eliel Saarinen came to Cranbrook, he and Wright were in close contact, and Wright visited Cranbrook to

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and red and yellow plums, scattering them over the ground at a shake of the hand. . . The herd I would have: gentle Holsteins and a monarch of a bull—a sleek gleaming decoration of the fields and meadows as they moved about, grazing. Sheep grazing too on the upland slopes and hills; the plaintive bleat of little white lambs in spring. Grunting sows to turn all waste to solid gold" (Frank Lloyd Wright, *Autobiography*, [New York, 1977], 193). One of the Taliesen fellows, Frances Nemton, remembers a two-year period in which Taliesen apprentices ran the farm themselves and did a much better job than the tenant farm couple who had previously run it. But after the success of this farming effort, Wright returned from Arizona and told them to get back to architecture: "Come on back boys, I've missed you." Thereafter the farm was always handled by tenant farmers. But Wright acquired more land and had a large dairy herd, horses, pigs, and chickens as envisioned in his image of the place. Telephone interview, 25 January 1993.

give annual lectures.<sup>24</sup> But in Cranbrook's early abandonment of the farm landscape and its adoption of a current ornamental style for the landscape around the Booth house, we see the beginning of a shift from the basic founding ideas of Cranbrook, ideas about the use of the vernacular and regional models. Yet something of the original intent was kept in the eventual shaping of the Cranbrook grounds into an educational institution, an iteration of Booth's desire to include a useful role for the land where he had chosen to live and build his house.

#### O. C. Simonds

By far the greatest impact on Cranbrook's overall character was made by the landscape design of Ossian Cole Simonds (1857–1931), who worked intermittently at Cranbrook from 1910 to 1923. Simonds is known for his design of Graceland Cemetery in Chicago, and for his landscape ideas as part of the Prairie School.

24. Robert Clark et. al., *Design in America: The Cranbrook Vision 1925–1950* (New York, 1983), 281.

Based on Arts and Crafts ideas of tying art to its locale, using vernacular materials and crafts, and weaving them into an art which gave a sense of place, Prairie School landscape design used native plants, materials, and topography to capture the essence of a locality. In landscape, the flat prairie and its horizontal lines were considered the leitmotif for the planting design. Plants with horizontal branching habits — “crabs and haws” (crabapples and hawthorns)—were considered most important because they reinforced the horizontal dominant lines of the overall prairie landscape. Simonds and Jens Jensen, the Danish landscaper of several Frank Lloyd Wright houses, sought to express the character of the Midwest and became the spokesmen for the landscape design of the Prairie School by articulating their ideas in *The Sketchbook* (1902–07) and *House Beautiful* (1896–present). In these popular magazines of the period, Simonds advocated the acceptance and understanding of the particular topography and native plants of a region, with design deriving from regional conditions. At Cranbrook, applying the idea of the vernacular to the landscape, Simonds made his strongest mark in concentrating on the deciduous Michigan forest and its fall colors.

Simonds was born in Michigan and studied architecture with William Le Baron Jenney at the University of Michigan. In 1878 he went to work for Jenney in Chicago. There he was assigned to work on the new Graceland Cemetery for the city of Chicago, a project on which he would continue to work throughout his professional life. Graceland was an important example of the rural cemetery movement that encouraged the building of new cemeteries in the outskirts of cities of industrial America as green parks for the Sunday outings of a newly urbanized population.<sup>25</sup> Intending to practice architecture, Simonds left Jenney to work in a partnership, Holabird, Simonds and Roche, from 1880 to 1883. But the Graceland assignment was to continue, and he went back to work on it, later opening his own office (1903) in landscape rather than architecture. In 1908, he came back to teach landscape design at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, for which city he also designed a park system. Here, he and Booth crossed paths, and it was in this year that he first did work at Cranbrook.<sup>26</sup> From

25. For a description of this movement see Stanley French, “The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the ‘Rural Cemetery’ Movement,” *American Quarterly* 26 (1974): 37–59; Neil Harris, “The Cemetery Beautiful,” in *Passing: The Vision of Death in America*, ed. Charles O. Jackson (Westport, Conn., 1977), 103–11; and Blanche Linden-Ward, *Silent City on a Hill: Landscapes of Memory and Boston’s Mount Auburn Cemetery* (Columbus, 1988).

26. Little is known of Simonds’ work. There is a biographical sketch of him in Philip Elwood, ed., *American Landscape Architecture* (New York, 1924), 74 *supra*, along with some documentation on Graceland Cemetery; and there is his own book, *Landscape Gardening*, written in 1920; what small fame he has today is related to his work at Graceland. It is known that Simonds was one of the thirteen founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architects and its president in 1913. In 1908 he started the landscape architecture program at the University of Michigan. While his connection to the Prairie School is acknowledged, neither his writing nor his other landscapes are well known. Indeed, very few of his designs have been published, and his work at Cranbrook was

this time there is a plan laying out the North Road of Cranbrook (Fig. 7).

Simonds saw himself as a landscape gardener, rather than as a landscape architect. The difference in these designations followed from important eighteenth-century English and nineteenth-century American debates about the scope of professional work. Simonds commented:

To use the word “architect” tends to take away that freedom and gracefulness that should go with the development of beautiful landscapes. . . . A “landscape-gardener” is one who may be thought of as trying to produce a Garden of Eden, a garden which is purely imaginary but is thought of as the work of a Power greater than man and more beautiful than anything the present generation has seen. The aim of the landscape-gardener is high, and this term, while not free from objections, conveys the correct idea. . . . All of the various terms employed are objectionable because each contains two words. “Landscape” is common to all, and if but one word were to be used, “landscaper” would seem to be the most appropriate.<sup>27</sup>

Simonds further saw an affinity between the landscape gardener and the landscape painter, both students of the out-of-doors. While these views were a continuation of those of the eighteenth-century English Picturesque School, Simonds departed from Picturesque principles in the emphasis he placed on situation and locality and in an insistence on the use of the common plants (or weeds) of a region.<sup>28</sup>

In 1908 Simonds sketched out a scheme for the North Road at Cranbrook, and in 1910 a very large order of trees was placed for Booth by Simonds. In 1916, Booth wrote to Simonds to order the several thousand pines that Simonds had recommended he plant around the Greek theater, the first cultural piece of the composition (1915–16, Figs. 8, 9).<sup>29</sup> The planting of four-thousand pines

unknown. As of this writing, an Illinois landscape architect, Dean Sheaffer, is doing research on Simonds, and perhaps in a few years we will be able to round out the picture of his work.

27. O. C. Simonds, *Landscape Gardening* (New York, 1931), 18–19.

28. The chapter headings in *Landscape Gardening* indicate that the landscape design jobs of Simonds’s time were mainly found in parks, home grounds, roads, and farms. This last category, particularly, would not figure in any landscape text today, but in this choice Simonds reflected both the region in which he was working, a region of large farms, and the iconographic and social importance of farms in the landscape. Predictably, roads were a central concern of Simonds’s time; it was, after all, the dawning of the era of the automobile. School grounds, botanical gardens, cemeteries, and regional plans (whose real purpose was the laying out of suburbs) complete his list of chapter subjects and give us a sense of the kinds of jobs which occupied Simonds’s professional life.

29. Marcus Burrowes designed the building, which was made to house the Cranbrook Theater. The product of the Detroit Art and Crafts Society’s very active theater group, it influenced theaters all over the United States. A recent article has shown its influence on Frank Lloyd Wright’s Hollyhock House in Los Angeles. The owner of Hollyhock House, Aline Barnsdall, sought to make her home the centerpiece of an extensive theatrical community on Olive Hill in Los Angeles. For it she planned to secure people like Irving Pichel, the principal actor and co-director of the Arts and Crafts Theater in Detroit. The Cranbrook





Fig. 8. Cranbrook Estate including Greek theater showing four thousand pines planted by O. C. Simonds, built 1916, photograph by Neil Airphotos, 1922 (E 372). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

provided the theater with a secluded forest in which to stand, isolating it from views of either the Booth house or the later art academy. It is possible that the pine planting was inspired by such different notions as the association of the Greek sacred sites with evergreen forests, the desire for evergreens in a climate with long winters, and finally the intent to echo a vernacular Michigan formation, the pine barrens.<sup>30</sup>

Theater appeared as the subject of the lead article in the first issue of *Theater Arts Magazine* in November 1916. See A. Friedman, "A House is Not a Home: Hollyhock House as Art-Theater Garden," *JSAH* 51 (1992): 239–60.

30. The pine barrens of Lake Michigan were prominently featured in long articles (for example, 8 April 1891, 159; 29 April 1891, 195; 6 May 1891, 208; 20 May 1891, 232; 17 June 1891, 278–79; and undated clipping, 304), in the most influential landscape journal of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, *Garden and Forest*, edited by Charles Sargent. Sargent was director of the Arnold Arboretum and also part of a group of intellectuals associated with the Arts and Crafts group in Boston.

Though the model of the Greek sacred site, a white classical temple in an evergreen grove, provides an incredibly felicitous combination under Mediterranean light and heat, it may be less inviting in a climate where gray skies and long winters prevail. But through all seasons the mass of evergreens did serve to separate the Greek theater from the rest of Cranbrook's buildings. In keeping with his vision for this space, Simonds may have foreseen a careful culling of these dark woods, and thus an eventual opening up to more light. In any case, the forest would have been quite open for several decades, as it was made up of young pine trees.

After the theater planting was completed and the theater inaugurated, Booth asked Simonds to return to Cranbrook in order to outline an overall plan:

I think I have never asked you before just what you would do in the way of planting if you were permitted to have your own way. I should now like to have you spend a day on the place and then give me your

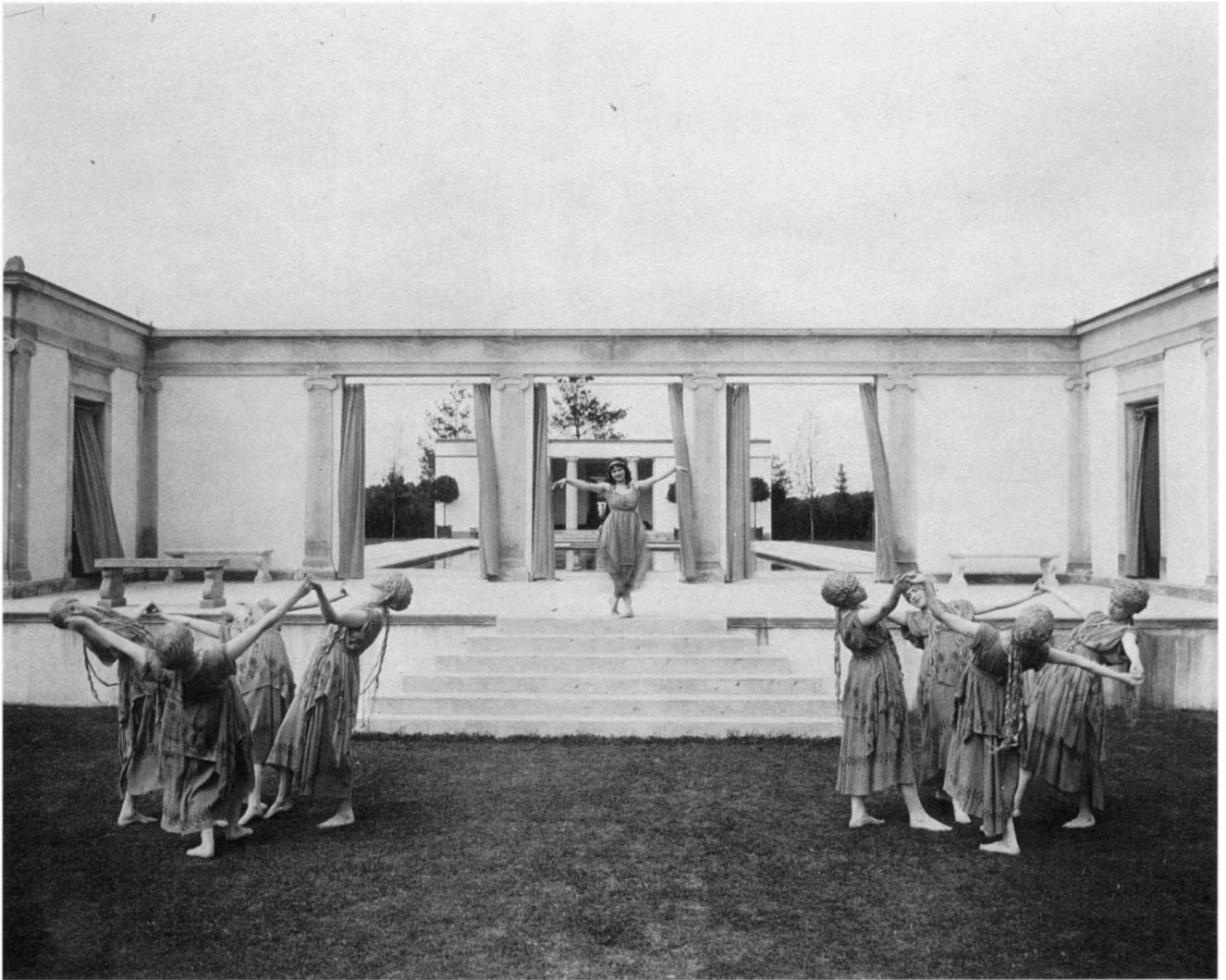


Fig. 9. Greek theater with small pines in background, 1916 (E 330). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

outline as to just what would be the right thing to do to substantially complete the initial planting plan of Cranbrook.<sup>31</sup>

At this time, a topographical survey was drawn to show existing plantings and the lakes that had been added after an earlier survey. Simonds promised to come to Cranbrook and finish his plans within the year, as Booth appeared anxious to complete the complex:

I wish to avoid a haphazard blowing ahead. . . I have been doing this more or less from year to year undoubtedly making some progress but perhaps making more than the reasonable number of mistakes.<sup>32</sup>

Simonds's forest planting is one of the most distinctive contributions to the first landscape. In 1922, Simonds sent Booth a blueprint with an area marked in red, showing the section he intended to cover with forest. For his proposal for the foresting,

31. Booth to Simonds, 8 January 1916, G. G. B. papers, Box 18, Folder 7, 1981-1.

32. Ibid.

using specific trees in plant colonies, he had already consulted with a Dr. Roth at Ann Arbor about the suitability to climate of his choice of trees. Booth approved Simonds's plan to use between two hundred and four thousand trees of each species (with an average of one thousand) and to make sugar maples the dominant species on the highest contours, this choice of site making the maples' fall color most visible (Fig. 10). Simonds also recommended saving some on-site large trees and apple trees from the extant apple orchard for integration in the one-species colonies. Later, when the Institute of Science was built, a good part of these woods was removed, including some of the sugar-maple planting.

Most of the forest planting was done between 1922 and 1923. Cecil Billington, Booth's secretary at the *Detroit News*, confirms this date by a February 1922 letter to Booth in Paris:

Mr. Simonds finished the planting at Cranbrook and at Mr. Wallace's place.<sup>33</sup> I believe there were a few holes that there was not stock to fill, but these will be taken care of in the spring. The weather has

33. The residence of H. L. Wallace, the Booths' son-in-law.



tance of expressing in highway design the different terrains the road traverses: rolling hills, rocky outcrops, mountainous or prairie terrains, and his views provide a commentary on his work at Cranbrook.

Simonds's 11 June 1929 landscaping plan for the Planning Commission of the Village of Birmingham, then a part of the Bloomfield Hills township, lists the village's three main features of natural beauty: its rolling land, native forest growth, and streams.<sup>36</sup> While Simonds made general suggestions for the preservation and enhancement of the village's natural resources, his recommendations for the improvement of Woodward Avenue, as it passed through Birmingham to Cranbrook, are particularly interesting. In place of a bare bank along the avenue, Simonds recommended the use of a variety of plantings to recreate the charm of the irregularity of Birmingham's existing, natural roadside borders. Throughout the document, Simonds noted the opportunity provided by Woodward Avenue: a broad open space nearly two hundred feet wide that could be made beautiful and comfortable for pedestrians. Again, a variety of plantings would help to achieve a park-like effect along the thoroughfare: the inclusion of parks along Woodward Avenue's low spots would punctuate its length on the way to downtown Detroit and provide relief from the continuous line of brick and concrete walls. Sixty years later, Simonds's animus toward the lawn and his suggestion of winding paths (similar to present day jogging paths) to replace the straight, hard sidewalks along the highway seem prescient.

With Corfield, Simonds shaped the Cranbrook site. His work on its first landscape set the character of the land and presented ideas for its access, clearly showing development of the principles of the Arts and Crafts' connection to place, the use of local natural resources, and indigenous plantings. Under Simonds, roads for access were built, and the two highest knolls were selected as focal points—one for the Booth house, the other for the academy's art gallery and library (Fig. 11).<sup>37</sup> Other examples of his work, in addition to his overlaying of the massive forest planting on the farm land and apple orchard, are his keeping the mill race (with Booth's guidance), his modification of the original stream system to make two new lakes, and his establishment of the largest lake (ten acres) as a setting for Kingswood, across from the Booth house.

36. Document with a letterhead reading *Simonds and West*, 1101 Buena Avenue, Chicago, 11 June 1929, G. G. B. papers, Box 11, Folder 15, 1981-01.

37. The selection of the two knolls was an important formal idea that came out of this period, but it was not Simonds's work alone. The recognition of the relationship between topography and design that led to the visual connection between the two knolls on the site came from Henry Booth's scheme for the academy, designed as a thesis for Eliel Saarinen at the University of Michigan's School of Architecture. This connection was acknowledged and shaped further by both Simonds and Saarinen. Despite his work on the site, Simonds's role at Cranbrook remained unacknowledged. After his death in 1931, only three of his plans for Cranbrook remained in the archives.

### *The Olmsted brothers' firm: Percival Gallagher*

Between 1926 and 1928, the office of the Olmsted brothers provided landscaping for the site of Christ Church at Cranbrook. The landscape firm of John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920), and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1878-1957), respectively nephew and son of Frederick Law Olmsted, landscaped the grounds of the church, which was Cranbrook's architectural founding stone. The Olmsted firm, however, affected the character of the overall site less than either Corfield or Simonds, partly because Christ Church was and remains to this day a separate entity, physically separated by roads from the rest of Cranbrook, and partly because the firm was not given enough scope to act. Further, Cranbrook seems to have been a minor job for the Olmsted brothers, receiving little of their attention. At any rate, the firm's work did not yield a first-rate result.

At John Charles Olmsted's death, the office was left in the hands of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., who had already taken on a large public role as founder of the National Park Service and member of the Macmillan Commission, which shaped Washington, D.C. in the 1920s. Because of his commitments, Olmsted, Jr. was not involved at Cranbrook. The work there fell to the firm's Percival Gallagher, who was contracted by O. H. Murray from Bertram Goodhue's office in 1926.<sup>38</sup>

We are building a church and rectory in the Bloomfield Hills district. We have laid out a complete plan showing roads, walks, walls, etc. but we are anxious to get some idea of what planting would be suitable for this locality. We wonder if you would care to act as a consultant on this problem and perhaps furnish us with a planting plan and let us know what your fee would be for such service.<sup>39</sup>

Throughout 1926-27, an exchange of letters between the Goodhue and Olmsted offices defined the Olmsted role at the site.<sup>40</sup> In those years, Gallagher met with Booth and provided a plan so that grading for work on the foundation for the walls of the church could begin. In late 1927, Olmsted was involved in the adjustment of plantings necessitated by the decision to widen Lone Pine Road; in November of that year, Booth requested from the firm a figure for doing the plantings, excepting the larger evergreens and elm trees. The correspondence also reveals the basis for a fee dispute which ultimately ended the Olmsted role at Cranbrook on a bitter note, and it suggests a fair level of intervention in the

38. After Goodhue's death his firm was called Mayers, Murray, and Philip, Bertram Grovesnor Goodhue Associates. Murray was one of the three main associates.

39. Murray to Gallagher, 9 December 1926, Olmsted Papers and Records, Job 7754, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Though he mentions laying out a plan showing roads and walks, the walks are in fact on the Olmsted office plans as their design, and the roads seem to have been existing ones since the widening of Lone Pine Road caught everybody by surprise. Goodhue's office would not have done the site plan, therefore, except for locating the building.

40. Letter exchange, Murray and Gallagher, 9 December 1926 to 29 February 1928.

Fig. 11. Booth House and art academy as shaped by plan idea of Henry Booth and the architecture of Eliel Saarinen, view of visual connection between the two knolls on the site looking toward the second knoll from the first, 1966 (FD 266.14). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)



landscape by Booth.<sup>41</sup> Gallagher's assistant and man on the site, a Mr. Sloet, began work at Cranbrook with a revised plan which was subject to changes both by O. H. Murray and Booth. Sloet's correspondence with Gallagher gives further evidence of Booth's involvement.<sup>42</sup>

Limited to selecting and ordering plants and supervising the execution of the plans, the Olmsted firm continued to work at Cranbrook in early 1928. Booth seemed satisfied with its final plan, redlined, with a revised list of plantings (Fig. 12), "although some little changes which have taken place since the visit of your representative would necessitate some slight adjustments which

41. "I estimate our charge for this service to be a fee for the plan of \$500 plus expenses including assistant's time in working out . . . the plan and drafting, travel and subsistence, which would altogether probably not exceed \$800" (Gallagher to Murray, 14 January 1927). When Gallagher presented a bill for \$1,200 at the end of the job, Booth insisted that his letter had said \$800. A correspondence between Booth, Gallagher, and Murray ensued, with Murray declining to support Gallagher. The relationship between Booth and the Olmsted Office ended, and Gallagher was paid \$800.

42. "The grading has been practically completed, but Mr. Booth does not intend to do any planting there until spring, with the exception of some large trees and evergreens which he intends to move during the winter. Mr. Booth has placed some stakes for large elm trees. These are to give the impression of being old trees, which were left when the Church was built. Generally speaking, Mr. Booth favors fairly heavy planting about the houses of the rector and sexton, and comparatively little planting about the Church itself. Mr. Booth pointed out several views of the church and of the pond from various angles that he would like to keep open. This means some revisions again in our planting plan and it was arranged with Mr. Booth to do this and forward the plan to him in the near future. . ." (Gallagher to Murray, 19 November 1927).

can easily be taken care of here."<sup>43</sup> By May 1928 the issue of the fee came to dominate the correspondence. When O. H. Murray at the Goodhue office sided with Booth, both the exchange and the relationship ended.

The Olmsted planting list shows a great variety of trees and plants. In fact, the planting may be too varied; no dominant trees or shrubs tie the design together. Just before installation, the firm revised its list—the large trees were reduced and replaced with a greater supply of shrubs, a result of the widening of Lone Pine Road. What remained were a few, large-canopied trees, smaller under-canopy trees, large, medium and small shrubs, and a great assortment of perennials for flower beds. Today, a landscaper would be hard put to find a third of the Olmsted list, which called for multiple varieties of common plants not usual to the nursery trade: shrubs such as nannyberry, red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*) and black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpus*). The list is rich in the popular plants of the period. Mock orange or *Philadelphus*, for example, is represented by five different kinds: *Philadelphus lemoine*, *Ph. avalanche*, *Ph. nivalis*, *Ph. gordonianus*, and *Ph. falconeri*. There were five different varieties of honeysuckle: *Lonicera spinosa alberti*, *L. maacki*, *L. bella albida*, *L. moocowi*, *L. bella rosea*; and of viburnums: *V. lantana*, *V. carlesi*, *V. lentago*, *V. cassinoides*, *V. sargentii*; as well as three varieties of quinces: *Cydonia japonica umbilicata*, *C. japonica*, and *C. maulei*. Only one plant on the Olmsted list can be matched in number of varieties by a contemporary nursery, the ubiquitous juniper: it lists *Juniperus chinensis*, *J. pfizeriana chinensis horizontalis*, *J. sabina tamarisciflora*, *J. communis depressa*, and *J.*

43. Booth to Gallagher, 25 February 1928.

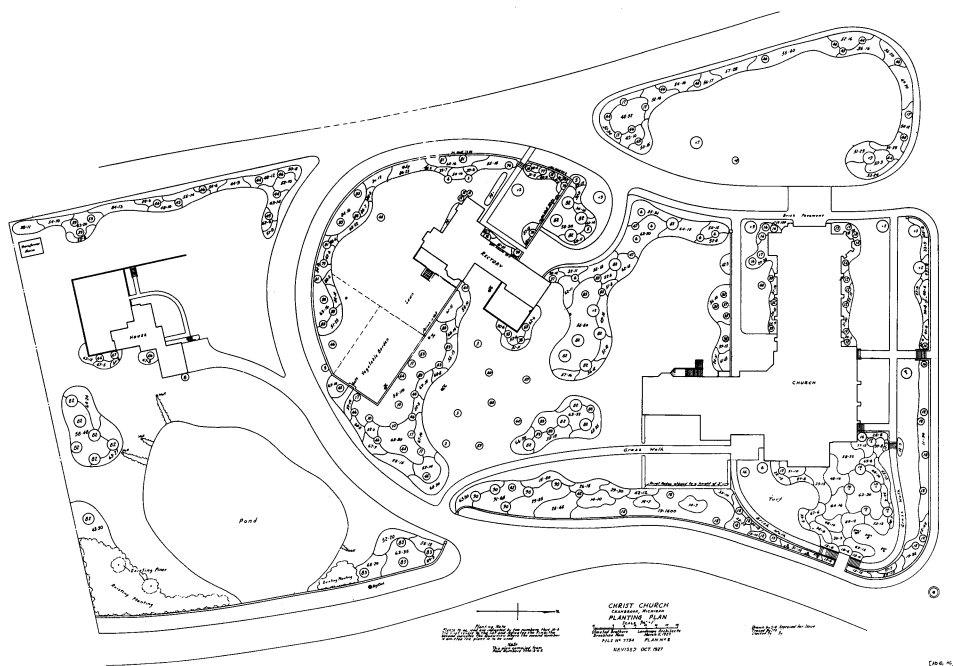


Fig. 12. Olmsted brothers' planting plan for Christ Church, 1928 (AD 10.190). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

*sargentii*. The many varieties available indicate different working conditions for landscape design.

While the list is extensive in variety, the Olmsted firm's role at Cranbrook was limited. Whether Booth's apparent involvement in a range of landscaping decisions indicates interest on his part or lack of confidence or sympathy with the firm is not known. What is clear, however, is that the Olmsted firm did not shape the landscape nearly as significantly as its successors. Even the narrow influence of the Olmsteds' work on Cranbrook, however, cannot be considered a success. The separateness of the Christ Church site was in itself limiting, but the greater difficulty was the widening of Lone Pine Road late in the process of design. This eliminated the large trees for the small site but did not provide a redesign in tune with the new site. Even though it was something of a transition between the larger scale landscapes of Corfield and Simonds and the second landscape of courtyards, it failed to achieve any of the results of either the large- or small-scale landscapes of Cranbrook.

#### *The second landscape*

The second landscape of Cranbrook consists of its courtyards. Here we see a more formal expression of Arts and Crafts landscape ideas. A description of these ideas in the overall American context has not yet been attempted, except for this author's synthesis of principles from its contemporary practitioners and writers.<sup>44</sup> A study of the landscape work of the Arts and

44. D. Balmori, "The Arts and Crafts Garden," *Tiller* 1 (1983): 17–27. See also David C. Streatfield, "The Arts and Crafts Garden in California," in Kenneth Trapp, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in California: Living the Good Life* (exh. cat. The Oakland Museum, 1993), 35–54.

Crafts movement in England, however, has been published by Jane Brown.<sup>45</sup>

Four principles can be distilled from the writings of landscape practitioners and writers in the United States Arts and Crafts movement of the early-twentieth century (1900s to 1930s): that the garden be natural, that is, made of indigenous plants; that it be composed for color; that there be a clear and sensitive transition from building to garden and from garden to nature; and that the landscape work be made in part by the person residing in it; that is to say, designed not just by professionals.<sup>46</sup>

45. J. Brown, "The Arts and Crafts Garden 1890–1914," in *The Art and Architecture of English Gardens* (New York, 1989), 113–77. Gertrude Jekyll (1843–1932) was the leading figure in the creation of the Arts and Crafts garden, and William Robinson, gardener and publisher of the influential journal *The Garden*, applied Arts and Crafts ideas to the treatment of landscape. Using the plain English cottage as their primary source of inspiration, they first articulated its key principles, which were disseminated in a number of journals: in England, *The Garden and Country Life*; in America, Charles Sargent's influential *Garden and Forest*, Gustav Stickley's *The Craftsman*, and Herbert C. Wise's *House and Garden*. *The House Beautiful* and *Country Life in America* were popular magazines that used "how-to-and-for-how-much" articles to promote this type of garden to large audiences. In *Wood and Garden*, Jekyll stated her belief that "it is upon the right relation of the garden to the house that its value and the enjoyment that is to be derived from it will largely depend." The transition from house to garden was to be as careful as that from garden to nature: "Where a wood joins the garden, some bold groups of flowering plants are to be planted, as a Mullein in one part and Foxglove in another; for it is pleasant to project the sight far into the wood, and to let the garden influences penetrate here and there, the better to join the one to the other" (Jekyll, 270). This kind of transition is one of the most subtle and best features of the Arts and Crafts garden.

46. Jekyll dedicated her book, *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden* (London, 1908), to color, approaching the color composition of gardens as one would that of paintings. Jekyll follows Ruskin, who noted that "if you

In Simonds' work we have already seen the first two principles clearly applied in the use of regional plant materials, characteristics, and color (the evergreen massings and fall colors in trees). These are most suitable to a large-scale landscape. In the second landscape, we see the deliberate employment of the principle of transition from building to nature.

*The second landscape: Eliel Saarinen, C. De Forrest Platt, E. A. Eichstaedt, and Loja Saarinen*

The three main elements of the second landscape can be identified as the following: 1) the use of courtyards as landscape, that is, a green space defined architecturally by buildings, steps, fountains, sculptures, and pergolas; 2) the use of vines along buildings; and 3) the change of the scale of planting outside the courtyards. In the use of courtyards, we see the work of Eliel Saarinen, who shaped the exterior spaces around the Cranbrook School for Boys, the faculty housing and studios, the Kingswood School for Girls, and the Science Museum (Figs. 13, 14).

The Cranbrook courtyard is closely related to the design of open space as conceived in the Arts and Crafts movement, where space was to be formally defined and delineated around a building. The Arts and Crafts movement in England symbolically linked the courtyard to its medieval antecedents, the courtyards of monastic establishments. In turn, under the movement's influence, courtyards were introduced to American campuses, with reference to both monastic precedents and to early English colleges, such as those at Oxford and Cambridge, which had been built around courtyards.<sup>47</sup>

In the second landscape, also, the architect held a prominent position, a position that was the result of a particular concern of the Arts and Crafts movement. Architecture's interplay with the landscape was an issue of great aesthetic interest and it was uppermost in architects' minds. It was this interest which led to the division of landscape work into two parts: the area immediately adjacent to the building (the courtyards designed by the architects and planted usually by a horticulturist) and the larger landscape worked on by a landscaper.

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have a good eye for colours, you will soon find out how constantly Nature puts purple and green together, purple and scarlet, green and blue, yellow and neutral grey, and the like; and how she strikes these colour-concords for general tones, and then works into them with innumerable subordinate ones" (John Ruskin, "Letter III On Colour and Composition," *The Elements of Drawing: In Three Letters to Beginners* [London, 1857]).

47. Paul V. Turner, in his study of the American campus (*Campus: An American Tradition* [Cambridge, Mass, 1989]), has shown how the earliest tradition of the campus in America shunned courtyards and set freestanding buildings on a field. The enclosed courtyard did not enter campus design until it was used for American campus design in the late-nineteenth century. Ralph Adams Cram, 1863–1942, with his partner Bertram Goodhue, was to be one of the most important courtyard architects, as well as a leading member of the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts.

Eliel Saarinen clearly associated himself with the collegiate Gothic courtyard in his earliest design, that of the boys' school. Yet the relationship to a medieval and Gothic past was a critical and difficult one for him, as it was for many Arts and Crafts practitioners. The general problem was raised by a discussion between Goodhue and Saarinen, which Saarinen later recalled in his rather awkward written English:

That evening Goodhue told much about himself. He told about the great struggle of his life to force himself from the grip of the Gothic. He realized quite clearly that a new era was in the coming, and he was eager to fight for its principles. Goodhue was just then occupied with the Art Museum of Honolulu which already was a long road toward simplicity. But he said, "I am not yet free, I am not yet free, and I am going to continue the fight". . . Too bad though, he did not live long enough to reach his goal.<sup>48</sup>

While his first building at Cranbrook showed a certain debt to the collegiate Gothic, Saarinen moved to a greater simplicity of form and modern expression as he went on to the Kingswood School for Girls, the Institute for Science, and the academy. Like Goodhue, Saarinen struggled with the Gothic and left it behind by the time he designed the last building. He also turned his back on the Arts and Crafts idea of reference to vernacular buildings, which had influenced the design of his own studio at Hvitträsk, Finland. Booth's wish to have the farm buildings remodeled for the boys' school was not supported by Saarinen, who used the footprint of the buildings only and generated a totally different architecture in elevation.<sup>49</sup>

In the boys' school, the footprint of the farm buildings was used to create buildings of a different character, although the plan of the courtyard remained, refined by Saarinen. Saarinen and Wermuth, the contractor, persuaded Booth to accept his plan, not on aesthetic grounds, but by providing a cost estimate for the new complex slightly lower than that for the renovation of Booth's farm buildings. There is an important shift here, however. We are now looking not at buildings but at exterior spaces. We can see the beginning of this attention to exterior space in the drawing of the new boys' school plan, in which Saarinen has reversed the usual building/landscape figure (Fig. 15).

In each of Saarinen's successive buildings, the courtyards become increasingly less enclosed. They can be seen as part of a

48. Eliel Saarinen, "The Story of Cranbrook," and "Cranbrook" (see n. 2), 5.

49. In this, Saarinen employed a procedure which nineteenth-century architects imagined was that of medieval architects, who, they said, took the given, fixed form of the Roman basilica, and by variations in volume, height, and mass, produced Gothic buildings greatly different in character. Victor Hugo reflects this nineteenth-century interpretation of medieval architects' work in reference to Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris: "There are imperturbably two naves intersecting in a cross whose top end is rounded into an apse. The envelope may be sculptured or embroidered but beneath it is the Roman Basilica" (*Notre Dame of Paris*, trans. John Sturrock [Harmondsworth, 1978], 130).



Fig. 13. Eliel Saarinen, enclosed courtyard of the Arts and Crafts studio in left foreground, aerial view of academy, built 1928, photographed 1958 (FD 81.14). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

continuum, which, starting from a more clearly medievalist scheme of courtyards defined by buildings, went on to partially enclosed courtyards and finally to terraces. At Kingswood, courtyards compete with open terraces, the site of the main activity of students; at the science institute, though a small, interior courtyard existed originally (now absorbed into the building), the main exterior space is a flat, open terrace with a large reflecting pool serving as forecourt to the building. The treatment of courtyards at the Cranbrook School for Boys was continued in the infirmary, the administration building, and the first faculty residences. Saarinen's final piece, the art academy, seems the most successful resolution of the interplay and transition between buildings, terraces, courtyards, and landscapes and is a final wrenching away from medievalism and its enclosed courtyards.<sup>50</sup>

Through his development of the courtyards, Saarinen seems to have successfully resolved a dilemma that faced early-twentieth-

50. Of interest are the other elements Saarinen used to shape the exterior spaces: sculptures, fountains, pergolas, paving, inscriptions, walls, and courtyard plantings. These were the work not just of architects but also of sculptors such as Geza Maroti and Carl Milles.

century architects: how to treat the existence of historical models of spaces without the historical surface treatment of the planes which enclosed the space. The courtyard carried both a Gothic (that is to say, medieval, Christian, and Northern European) and an older, classical past. A part of these inheritances was the contradiction between the irregular, asymmetrical, individual expression of Gothic architecture and the classical symmetry along a central axis of the courtyards of Roman public buildings, still apparent in monastic establishments. Saarinen inherited these tensions, and he distanced himself gradually from historical forms by abandoning the enclosed courtyard, making it a circumscribed terrace that, while having a well-defined edge, was not bound by buildings on all sides. In addition, Saarinen worked with changes of level in the ground plane as a way of defining his exterior areas. By this method, he successfully resolved the main space of the art academy: he achieved definition of the space by changing grades along the edges rather than by using buildings as enclosing walls.

Design elements found in the Cranbrook courtyards give a sense of the elaborate layering of the landscape immediately adjacent to the buildings (Figs. 16–19). In these illustrations,

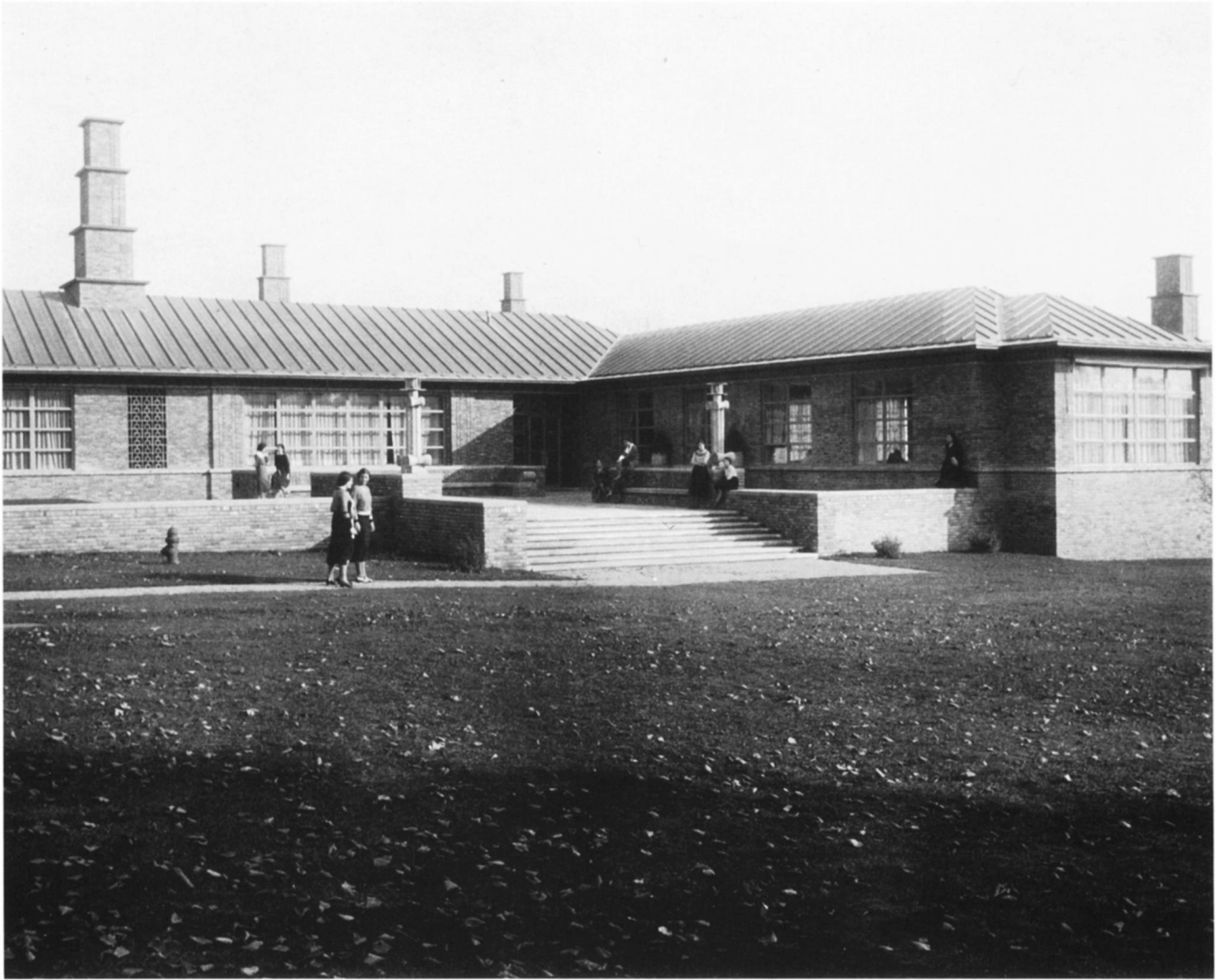


Fig. 14. Eliel Saarinen, semi-enclosed courtyard/terrace of Kingswood School, 1931 (K 74). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

plantings play a role but are only one of a constellation of elements. The buildings themselves develop passages with gates, portals, or arcades and make the landscape traverse them. In addition to the plantings, sculptures, fountains, pergolas, and benches incorporated into the courtyard, Saarinen built niches and pedestals into the walls and left them open for student additions. The art library and museum of Cranbrook Academy offer the richest interplay of building and semi-exterior (colonnade) and exterior (terraces with fountains) spaces. The area between the art library and museum is made into a portico leading to two, terraced open spaces: one, a courtyard with Carl Milles's Orpheus fountain (minus Orpheus); the other, an elongated formal courtyard with Milles's Europa and Triton fountains stepping down from the portico in graduated terraces. The elements of design are fewer here than in the boys' school, the courtyard is more like a formal garden, and the fountains are carefully placed on the portico's axis but at different ground elevations.

In the second landscape, then, the landscape of courtyards, the modulated elements that make the passage from building to landscape are central. They reveal the rich language developed by the Arts and Crafts movement for designing transitions from building to exterior. In the earliest complex, the transition is made with a variety and multitude of elements, many of them, such as sculpture, attached to the building. In the last composition, it is accomplished with fewer, larger, and more powerful elements, and these are less building-bound (for example, steps, fountains, terraces, allees). The exterior spaces of the earlier buildings vary little in section; in the exterior spaces of the last set of buildings, section is all.

In the first landscape, the search for the vernacular, for the character and materials of a region, pushed the landscape to resemble natural formations; in the second landscape, which related to buildings, another set of ideas ruled. This difference again highlights Saarinen's central problem: how to utilize formal ideas of the past without reproducing their forms. The early-

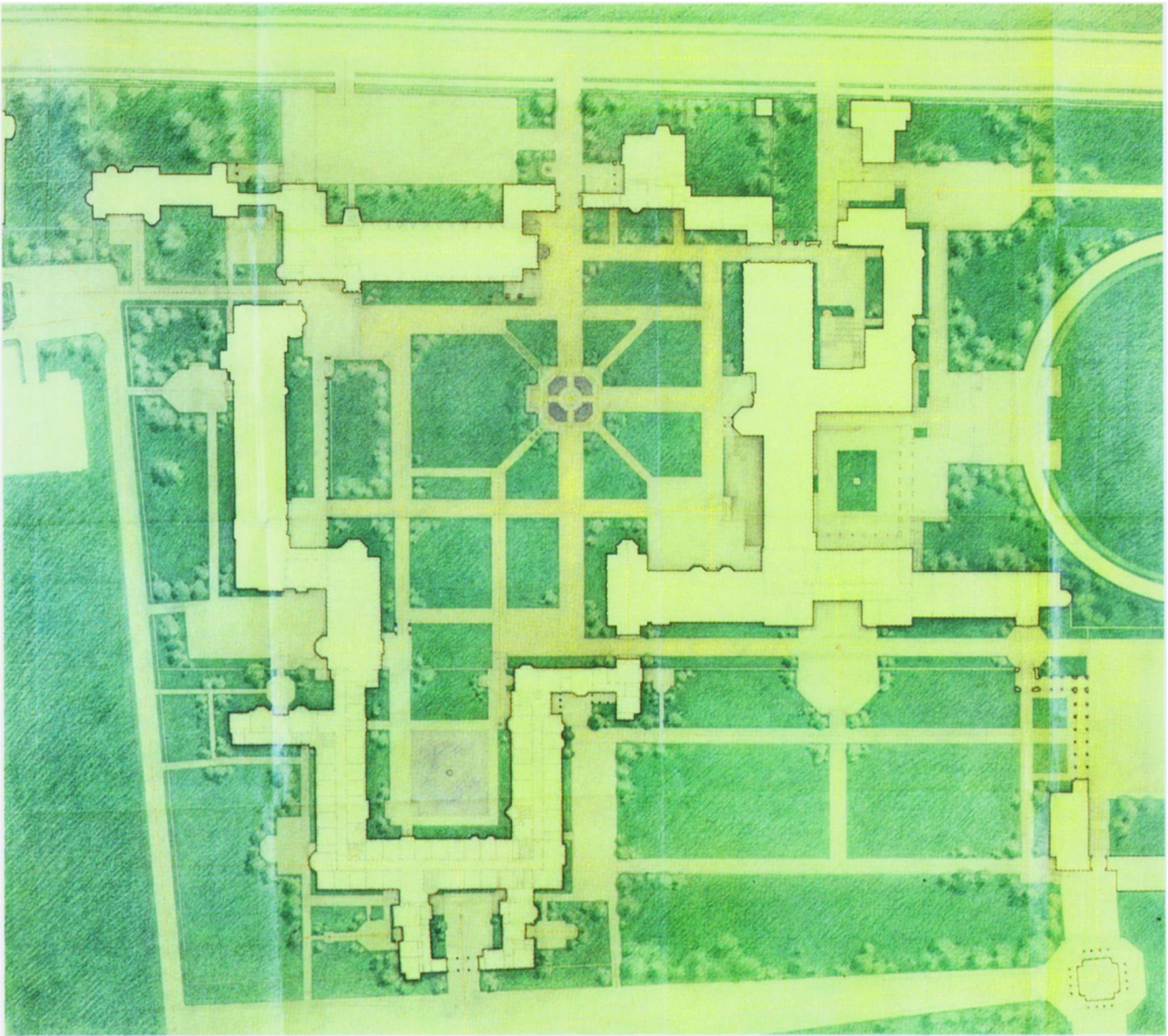


Fig. 15. Eliel Saarinen, plan of boy's school, reversing figure-ground relationships and showing shape and layout of courtyards, ca. 1926–27 (1982.98). (Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum)

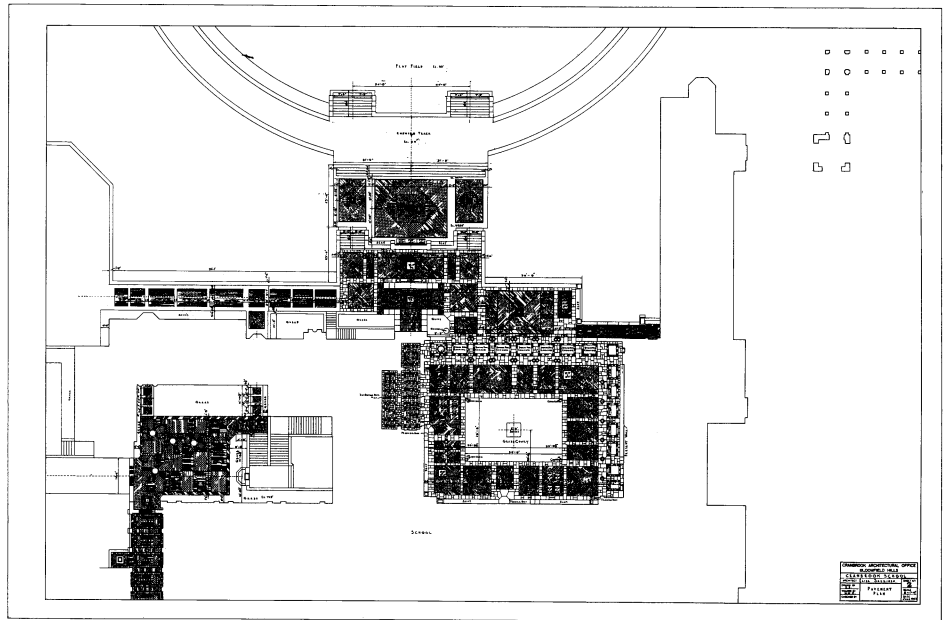
eighteenth-century Picturesque vision used a series of intermediate constructions such as hermitages, caves, and ruins to make an articulated transition from building to landscape. In the Arts and Crafts aesthetic, fountains, sculptures, pergolas, pavements, and inscriptions played the role of intermediate structure; to the design of these, Saarinen gave inordinate attention and care.<sup>51</sup> The paving patterns for courtyards, terraces, pergolas, and walks are continuously varied, contain many different materials, colors, and inscriptions, and shift subtly as one moves from space to space. Also, in keeping with the Arts and Crafts principle of integrating various arts, Saarinen included sculpture as an element of transition between architecture and landscape. It was a particu-

51. D. Balmori, "Architecture, Landscape, and the Intermediate Structure: Eighteenth-Century Experiments in Mediation," *JSAH* 50 (1991): 38–56.

larly felicitous partner to Cranbrook's architecture in the early stages and to the landscape in the later ones. Saarinen recommended his friend, Geza Maroti, to Booth to design sculptures for his boys' school buildings, where Maroti worked from 1927 to 1929. Maroti's sculpture was used to humanize a building and was fully integrated with it. Motifs for pillars, niches, and doorways, particularly in the stylized reliefs of flora and fauna and inscribed texts at these passage points, played pivotal roles in the movement from the built to the natural.

Following Maroti, from 1931 to 1951, Carl Milles also created sculptures and fountains that worked transitionally. But Milles's work reflects both a shift in the field of sculpture itself as well as his own interest in fountains and monumental public compositions; it is mainly free-standing and not part of a building. Woven into the landscape rather than the architecture, in a way it prefigures the large-scale pieces interacting with the landscape of

Fig. 16. Courtyard paving design, 1927 (AD 07.465). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)



the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>52</sup> Milles worked with Saarinen on the integration of his pieces and used water fountains, falls, and basins as critical elements in the shaping of landscape spaces (Figs. 20, 21). His fountains, in particular, should be considered as part of the Cranbrook landscape or at least as intermediate, unifying pieces between the architecture and the landscape. The effect of his work is most clearly seen in the art academy's portico, the centerpiece of a most accomplished passage from architecture to landscape. Here the Arts and Crafts agenda was fully realized: architecture, sculpture, and landscape flow into each other.

Three other persons also contributed in varying degrees to the second landscape. They are C. DeForrest Platt, E. A. Eichstaedt, and Loja Saarinen.

#### C. De Forrest Platt

The landscaper of the boys' school courtyards, C. De Forrest Platt, is virtually unknown. A graduate of the Harvard University landscape program in 1924,<sup>53</sup> he makes a brief appearance as landscaper of a French and Indian War site.<sup>54</sup> His role at Cranbrook as a consultant was much more modest than that of the earlier landscapers; his planting was mainly in the courtyards of the boys' school and the residences of its faculty (Figs. 22, 23). Platt appears on George Booth's payroll as landscape architect

52. An era best represented today by the collection of sculptures at Storm King, New York.

53. Information obtained from the Harvard University Archive records of the School of Architecture, now the Graduate School of Design.

54. For information regarding the restoration of Fort Necessity near Uniontown, Pennsylvania, the site of a battle on 3 and 4 July 1754 where 300 American colonists led by George Washington fought against 900 French and Indians for surrounding territory; see "The Restoration of Fort Necessity," *Landscape Architecture* 22 (April 1932): 215, 217. (My thanks to Diane Hilborn for the reference.)

employed on a monthly basis at \$250 dollars (approximately \$2,000 in 1990 dollars). We can observe, however, that his plant palette is very much in keeping with that of Simonds and the Olmsted firm in the use of regional and weedy plants.<sup>55</sup>

#### E. A. Eichstaedt

In 1934, Booth received a letter from E. A. Eichstaedt, a landscaper who had worked for Jens Jensen and who was known to Saarinen.<sup>56</sup> Eichstaedt asked Booth for work at Cranbrook, because everything there "has been done so well," and as a result of this correspondence, Eichstaedt was hired to landscape Kingswood and the smaller swimming pools such as the Jonas Pool (Fig. 24). His first proposal was for the planting of a bank and knoll, where he used plants from the Booth nursery. He also did a planting of Norway maples and Sargent cherries on a bank

55. Platt's plant list for residences on Academy Row: *Acer ginnala*, *Acer saccharum*, *Amelanchier laevis*, *Aronia arbutifolia*, *Betula alba*, *Cladrastis lutea*, *Clematis paniculata*, *Cornus florida*, Devil's can, *Euonymus alatus*, Flowering almond, *Forsythia suspensa fortunei*, *Ligustrum ibota*, *Ligustrum regelianum*, *Lonicera bella rosea*, *Malus baccata*, *Malus Bachtels*, *Malus Parkman*, *Philadelphus coronarius*, *Philadelphus virginialis*, *Pinus montana*, *Pinus mugo*, *Pinus sylvestris*, *Prunus glandulosa*, *Quercus rubra*, *Regel privet*, *Rhodotypos kerrioides*, *Spiraea thunbergii*, *Symphoricarpos racenosa*, *Syringa japonica*, *Syringa vulgaris*, *Viburnum tomentosum*, *Viburnum plicatum*, and perennials such as irises, peonies, phlox, and helenium.

56. "I worked for Mr. Jensen eight years, as field superintendent on large work. Since 1929 I have had my own practice. During this period I designed and executed the Lakeshore Estate of Mr. Alvin Macauley. In Battle Creek I designed and executed a twenty-five acre park for the Kellogg Company. The depression has crippled most of my other work, such as that of Mr. Emory W. Clark's Estate, which was not finished. Mr. Jensen has taught me a great deal about the theory of broad naturalistic design. . . Mr. Albert Kahn has recommended me on several occasions" (Eichstaedt to Booth, 21 August 1934, G. G. B. papers (1935-55), Box 2, Folder 7, Accession number 1981-5).



Fig. 17. Marquis Arch, ca. 1928 (CR 4090). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

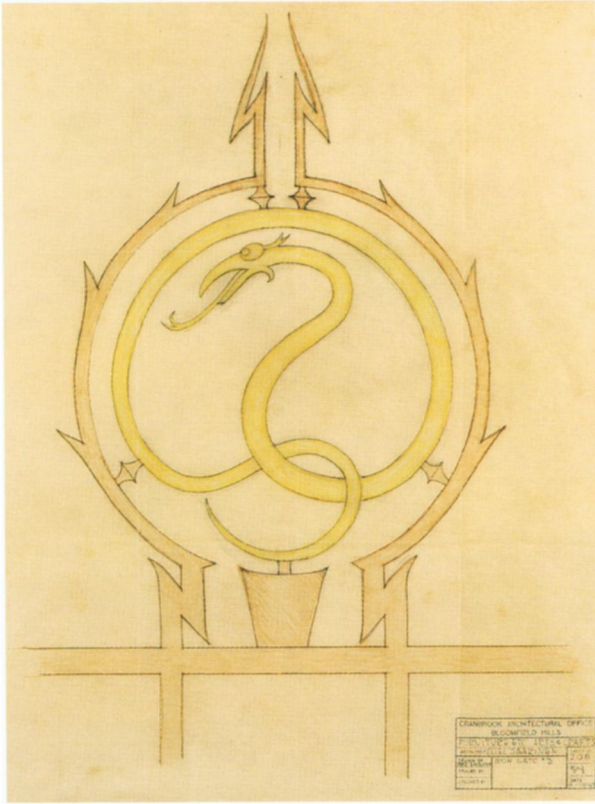


Fig. 18. Full-scale drawing for Iron Gate #3, 1929 (1986.19). (Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum)

covered with Mugho pine, suggesting the retention of the pine until the new trees had established themselves.<sup>57</sup>

Eichstaedt's June 1935 statement of professional fees indicates the scope of his work: the development of plans for Kingswood and supervision of its spring planting.<sup>58</sup> His accompanying tree list, consisting of small, understory trees—crabapple, lilac, black haw, dogwood, redbud, *Magnolia stellata*, *M. montana*, and Mugho pine—underscores the limitations of his task of planting on and around courtyards and terraces.<sup>59</sup> Eichstaedt also worked on certain other plantings: the areas of water basins around Kingswood and the Jonas Pool; the courtyard of the science institute (mainly with perennially flowering tulips); the Kingswood planting beds; and the area around the Orpheus fountain (a spring flower planting of delphinium, *Dictamnus albus*, and painted daisies, and a summer planting of yellow marigold Supreme with Blue Wonder petunias). This latter bedding-out scheme in the best Victorian tradition, the seasonal replacement of annuals, and combination of opposite colors of the color wheel, is quite unlike the Simonds approach.<sup>60</sup> Eichstaedt's last purchase for Cranbrook, from a Pinesville, Ohio nursery, was one requested by

57. Ibid.

58. Eichstaedt fee statement, June 1935.

59. Eichstaedt tree list, June 1935.

60. Eichstaedt to Booth, 28 November 1938.

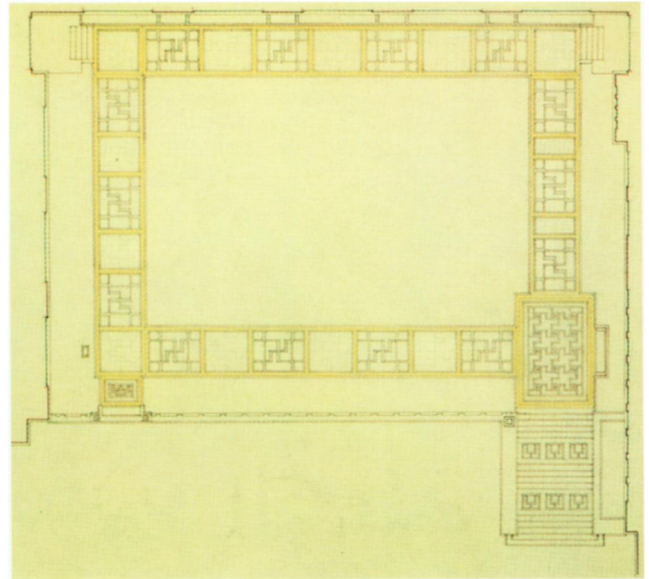


Fig. 19. Paving plan of terrace, 1930–31 (1982.22). (Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum)

Booth: sycamores and beeches for his own nursery.<sup>61</sup> Eichstaedt continued his work at Cranbrook until 1940, but it consisted of small, discreet pieces around buildings or fountains. Neither the sizes of trees nor the quantities of plantings from the existing plant lists show any major spatial impact. Like the efforts of all others after 1926, Eichstaedt's task was a small, localized one, and it did not attempt to weave in the landscape beyond the courtyards. Eichstaedt maintained his interest in Cranbrook throughout the 1950s, although his formal association with the academy had ended a decade before. In early 1955, Henry Booth noted that the landscaper had offered to give some free advice to the person in charge of grounds regarding the pruning of overgrown trees and shrubs around Kingswood. Eichstaedt felt the buildings had not been well treated and was particularly concerned because delegates of the American Society of Landscape Architects were to visit Cranbrook the following June. Henry Booth asked to be told when Eichstaedt planned to be on the grounds so that they could consult on other parts of Cranbrook.<sup>62</sup>

#### Loja Saarinen

Determining the role of Loja Saarinen at Cranbrook is complex, in large part because of her status as the wife of Eliel Saarinen. Loja was the head of Studio Loja Saarinen and the weaving department at Cranbrook, and the landscaper of the art library, museum, and her own residence. There is a clear outline of her work as director of the weaving department of the academy, but we know less about the rest of her activities at Cranbrook, which consisted essentially in contributions to Eliel's office work.

61. Sanford Allen to Eichstaedt, 25 March 1938.

62. Booth to Eichstaedt, 14 February 1955.



Fig. 20. Carl Milles, sculpture of Diána in Academic Court, Kingswood School, 1969 (K 2650.37). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

Her work may have remained anonymous because it was subsumed in that of a husband with a powerful public and professional image.

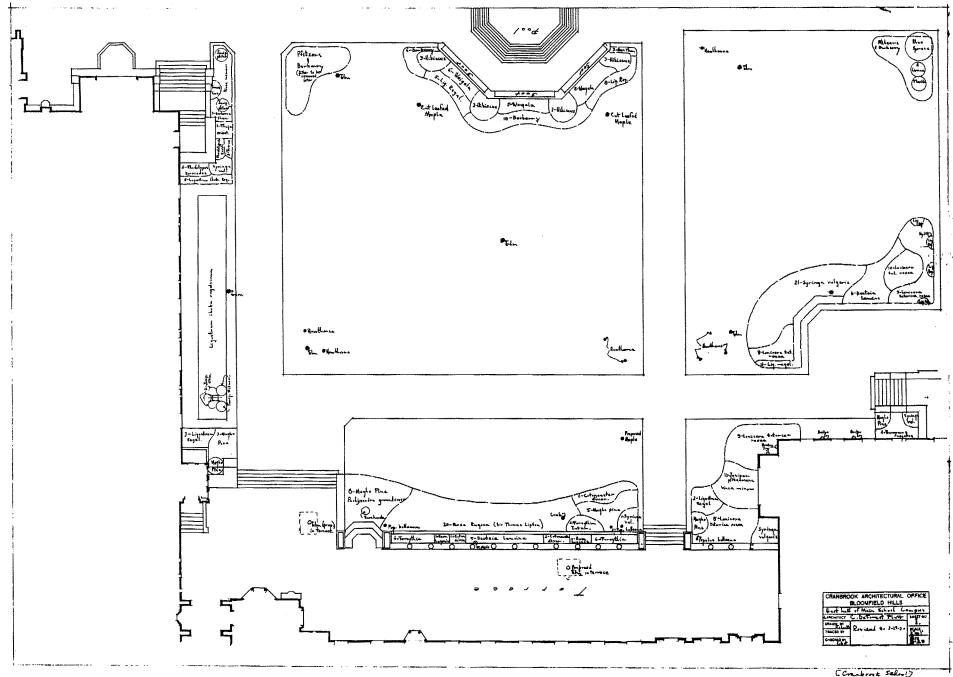
To try to extract the story of anyone's work from the shadows of that of another who is well known and whose story, therefore, has an expected pattern, development, and ending, would be difficult in any case. But when one is searching for a woman's story, linked to that of a husband who is a public figure, that difficulty is compounded. The extraction may be considered subversive, done to diminish the value of his work, or to make more of the woman's story than it deserves. For Loja Saarinen, another complication is that because it did not follow the expected, male career pattern, her story might not have been considered an acceptable narrative.<sup>63</sup> Myra Jehlen suggests that a

63. On the issue of women's work and the reasons for the lack of public visibility, there are several works which study the different aspects and conditions of women's work in different time periods. On the weak organizational structure of women's work in shop and craft and the economic importance of unpaid work of women in their fathers' and husbands' craft shops, see Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women in the Crafts in Sixteenth-Century Lyon," *Feminist Studies* 8 (Spring 1982), 1:47–80. On the lack of a woman's narrative for her work, due to the difference in women's careers from the established career patterns of men, see Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Writing a Women's Life* (New York, 1988). Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art* (London, 1988), addresses the issue of art history as a social construction of sexual difference, showing that by the definition of the terms of how work is done, women are excluded from the artist category. Also see Leslie Kanes Weisman, *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment* (Urbana and Chicago, 1992).



Fig. 21. Carl Milles, Europa and the Bull, and Triton fountains, ca. 1945 (7630 N). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

Fig. 22. C. de Forrest Platt, courtyard planting plan, east half of Main School (boys' school), 1930 (AD 07.48). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)



woman's right to her own story is contingent on her ability to act in the public domain.<sup>64</sup> For Loja, that right was undermined by her relegation to a role of seeming dependence on her husband. The reasons for the lack of a record of Loja's work in everything but weaving (a traditional art for women) thus seem clear.

Even our knowledge of Loja's work as a weaver and as head of the weaving department at Cranbrook is incomplete, because its importance was undervalued by speculation that her hiring was dependent on her marriage to Eliel. Ultimately, her achievements as head of the weaving studio were compromised by that relationship: her identity was so linked to Saarinen's that when his association with Cranbrook was terminated, so was hers.<sup>65</sup>

We have some scant information on Loja's other Cranbrook activities. We know she built the elaborate architectural model of the first ambitious scheme for Cranbrook<sup>66</sup> (which Booth later had destroyed to avoid comment that he started something he could not finish), and she was responsible for the interiors of



Fig. 23. C. de Forrest Platt, mature planting of boys' school courtyard, 1967 (CR 3791.1). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

Kingswood and the academy.<sup>67</sup> Of her landscape work, there is even less evidence, and what exists is either indirect or speculative. She was in charge of planting the two courtyards of the academy. But this last piece of information we discover incidentally, in her response to Booth's dismissal of her from the weaving department, a dismissal she heard about only through her husband.

67. Energies and monies were diverted to the construction of the girls' school (Ellen Scripp Booth's particular interest) and the science institute and away from Eliel's original, more ambitious scheme for the art academy. See Pound, *Only Thing* (see n. 12), 386.

64. Myra Jehlen, "Archimedes and the Paradox of Feminist Criticism," *Signs* 6.4 (1984): 581–82.

65. Loja was caught up in a fight between Booth and Saarinen. Booth did not want Saarinen, as president of Cranbrook, to accept contracts originating outside of Cranbrook. Saarinen finally resigned as president in order to take outside commissions.

66. There are accounts of bills paid to Loja for her architectural models for Cranbrook for which she was paid one dollar an hour (approximately equivalent to ten 1993 dollars): 100 dollars for the Kingswood model and 385 dollars for the model of the whole academy, administration and boys' school (G. G. B. papers, Box 19, Folder 34, Accession number 1981–1).

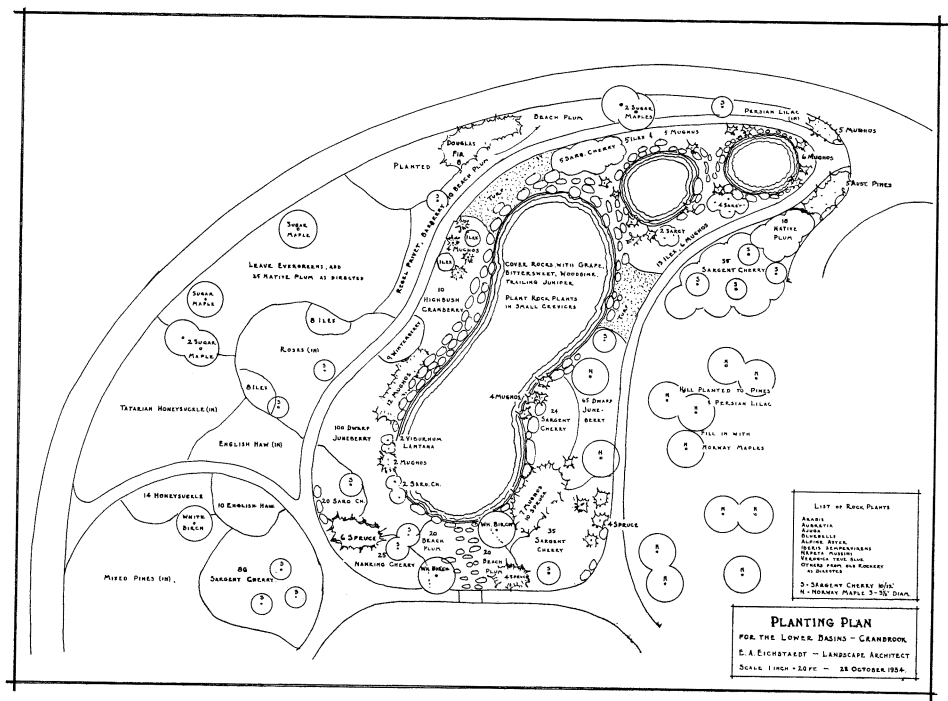


Fig. 24. E. A. Eichstaedt, planting plan for Kingswood, 1934 (Box 2, Folder 7, 1981.5). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

Dear Mr. Booth: 29 July 1942  
 When Mr. Saarinen brought me the sad news that from next semester on, I am not any longer the head of the weaving department, there came a few questions in my mind on which I would appreciate your answer. As you know besides being head of the weaving department I have also supervised the interior decoration at the Academy and for the last two years, I have with your consent planned the planting around the museum building.<sup>68</sup>

Booth did allow Loja to continue her “interest in the plantings,”<sup>69</sup> but he narrowed her sphere of influence in limiting her request for permission to order a number of seedlings for appropriate spring plantings: she was only to make a plan and list of the plants required, as the planting would be part of the general work under another’s direction.<sup>70</sup>

Again, only indirectly do we learn of her plans for the plantings and her direction of the work, usually implemented by Mike Vettraino, head gardener. Dominick Vettraino, Mike’s son, remembers several childhood visits to Loja with his father, meeting every fall to receive her colored drawings—“like her weavings” is the way he describes them—for the planting of the beds the following spring. These colored, patterned drawings were accompanied by a list of the plants to be grown over the winter in the greenhouse for the springtime setting out.<sup>71</sup>

68. L. Saarinen to Booth, 29 July 1942, G. G. B. papers (1942), 1981-1, CAA Correspondence.

69. Undated notation following conversation, reverse side of 29 July 1942 letter from L. S. to G. G. B.

70. Letter exchange, L. Saarinen and Booth, 1 September 1942 and 10 September 1942.

71. Interview with Dominick Vettraino, 6 October 1992.

We can only speculate about Loja’s influence on another of the Cranbrook landscapes. The original landscape for the Triton Pool courtyard of the art academy consisted of a double rank of horsechestnuts along the sides of the cascading pools, with an interior line of arborvitae (later removed, as they filled out and cut off the view of the fountain). We do not know for certain that Loja laid this out, but the horsechestnut is a curious choice for this tree planting: though an American and European tree, it is not as commonly planted in public places in the United States as it is in Europe, and even more rarely is it used in a linear planting. Its choice, therefore, seems particularly European and is quite possibly hers. We know that Loja started working on the courtyard in 1940, but she had come to live at Cranbrook in late 1930, and the trees were planted around 1935.

Marianne Strengell, a member of Cranbrook’s weaving department who succeeded Loja as director of weaving, remembers Loja’s direction of the planting at the academy. “She was always interested in plants and did all the planting at Hvitträsk also.”<sup>72</sup> One of Loja’s few extant drawings shows her addition of junipers to the planting bed at the plinth beside the steps descending from the art academy (Fig. 25), but we have none of her plans for the main courtyard and the Orpheus fountain terrace, which, we

72. Telephone interview, Marianne Strengell, 20 October 1993. The drawings were taken to the greenhouse at Cranbrook to grow the plants, then they were farmed out to a local nursery’s greenhouse, Weber’s. A telephone interview with Don Weber, retired owner of this nursery, revealed that all the nursery’s records had been thrown out in 1985, when the nursery was closed. The greenhouse at Cranbrook has none of its records.

know from letters and drawings, she was given to landscape.<sup>73</sup> Fortunately, Loja's public design role in weaving gives her other work credibility, and there is her own statement about the design of the interiors of the art academy and its plantings. This helps to redress the balance of the lack of documentation of the unpaid, invisible, and unacknowledged design work which Loja did at Cranbrook, by which the myth of the absence of women in design continues to be perpetuated.

Despite the difficulties of ascertaining the scope of Loja's work, we can draw some conclusions. Loja's work at Cranbrook represents a larger theme of the Arts and Crafts movement, the integration of domestic and professional work and family life. We have already noted that in reaction to the Industrial Revolution's separation of work and family life, the movement attempted an idealized reconstitution of both in one place. There had, of course, already been several such experiments to integrate domestic life and work, starting with William Morris's Red House in England. Loja was a part of Saarinen's own experiment in his studio at Hvitträsk. In the United States, Frank Lloyd Wright, under the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement generally and Saarinen specifically, brought family and apprentices together at the Taliesin Fellowship. At Cranbrook, we see Loja's role with those of her children, Pipsan and Eero, as an integration of the whole family into the work of the academy. (The archives and art museum contain drawings by Pipsan and Eero of various pavings and interior pieces of furniture; as teenagers and young adults, the Saarinen children designed and built these later for Kingswood.) Loja, her husband, and children were part of an extended family joining all members. The academy family was never free of strife, but it did manage to join students, teachers, and their families in an integrated and functioning society.

### Conclusion

Hitherto, we have dealt with the first objective of making visible the landscape of Cranbrook. Based on this narrative, the essay will now seek the second objective: by drawing out and interpreting its most salient characteristics, to make the history understandable.

First and foremost, the Cranbrook history shows the decline of landscape as an active art. In Cranbrook's development, the power of landscape to shape the environment decreased over time. This diminishing is most visible in Cranbrook's last project, the Institute of Science, which remains to this day an ill-sited building and landscape in the midst of an overall harmonious composition.<sup>74</sup> In fact, the story of Cranbrook can be seen as a

73. The paving pattern for this courtyard was developed by Eero Saarinen. The drawings are signed by him and thereby show the family at work in the Cranbrook venture.

74. The consequences of this siting are now being paid. Currently a major new access road from the north has been built to deal with the traffic that the institute has generated. Saarinen disagreed with Booth's selection of the location of the first temporary building for the institute.

micro-study of the decline in scope and artistic importance of landscape as an art: from World War II until the mid-1980s, when landscape reentered discourse with the other arts, this decline was noted generally but not documented in the particular.

The most obvious event marking this decline at Cranbrook is the discrepancy between what was envisioned and what was eventually built. We know from the exchange of letters in 1925 that Booth's stated intention and Saarinen's vision were that a landscape and horticulture school would be part of Cranbrook. But the school was never built—either Booth made his own decision to eliminate it, or he was persuaded to do so. Yet in Cranbrook's early years, landscape design had an important role. Corfield changed Cranbrook from a farm to an estate; O. C. Simonds had a vision of the treatment of the site as a whole, including the roads to it and the larger context of Bloomfield Hills, and in Cranbrook itself, he was able to carry this vision out. In the later Cranbrook, however, the Olmsted Brothers, C. De Forrest Platt, E. A. Eichstaedt, and Loja Saarinen were given smaller tasks in a set plan.

The number of landscapers used at Cranbrook is striking. Time may have played a role in this phenomenon, since Cranbrook was built over a period of twenty-five years, and the use of more than one landscaper would seem reasonable. But the involvement of so many people seems to demand a further explanation.<sup>75</sup> It may have been linked to a choice that Booth seems to have made early on—to eliminate landscape design as a discipline at Cranbrook. Had landscape been incorporated as a part of the curriculum, Booth might have engaged someone to carry out landscape plans over time, in much the same way as Saarinen did in architecture. Cranbrook's landscape would have benefited from this unified approach, as it did from the continuity of Saarinen's design in its built form. Despite the number and variety of landscapers, however, Booth's commitment to the philosophy of the Arts and Crafts did provide a constraint which

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He later said that "there was . . . one issue . . . which I regret I could not fight for more . . . the locating of the Institute of Science . . . Each of the Cranbrook Institutions should be so located that they all got a direct access from some of the streets surrounding the Cranbrook grounds . . . None of the institutions should become a thoroughfare for another institution. However, the temporary location of the Institute of Science was in the heart of the Cranbrook grounds so that the access to this had to be drawn through the grounds . . . Therefore, when the time had come for me to draw the plans for the final Institute of Science, I tried to correct the earlier mistake . . . by suggesting that the Institute of Science should be located . . . by Lone Pine Road. If this had been accepted, all the institutions of a complete Cranbrook could have had their respective direct access from the street, and the park-grounds at the heart of the Cranbrook community could have been saved as a quiet place for all those living in the Community" (E. Saarinen, "The Story of Cranbrook," and "Cranbrook" [see n. 2], 36.)

75. The main landscape professionals have been included in this article, but in the archives other professionals who came to carry out the small designs are named, for example, Albert Charpaize, a French landscaper, who in 1914 designed a rustic pergola (see Fig. 12).

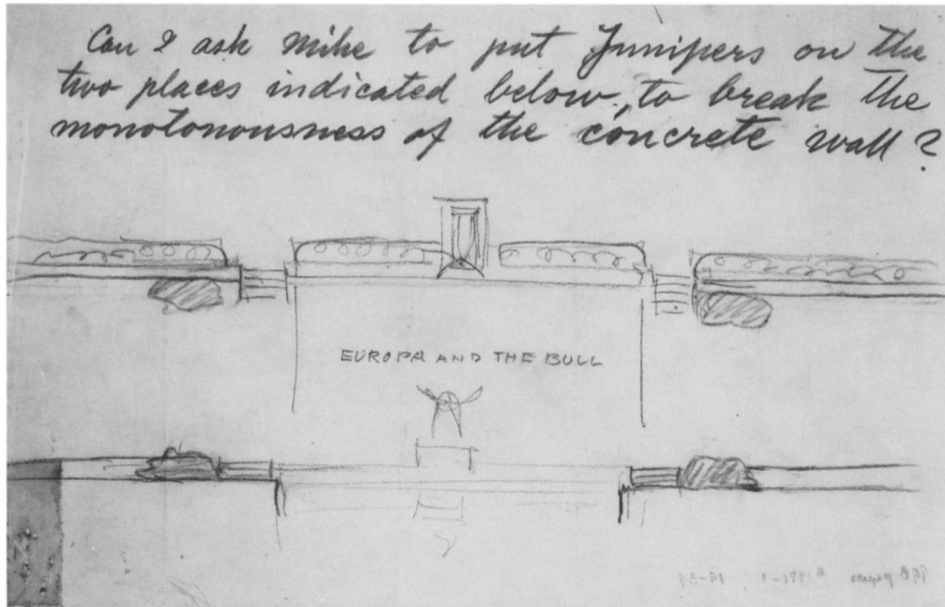


Fig. 25. Loja Saarinen, sketch in a letter for plantings by Europa and the Bull Fountain. (L. Saarinen to Booth, 1 September 1942, G. C. B. papers, Box 19, Folder 34, Accession number 1981-1). (Cranbrook Educational Community Archives)

resulted in cohesiveness; and from 1908 through the early twenties it allowed Simonds to develop his unified vision for the site, a vision which served it well over time.

Another sign of the diminished role of landscape is related to documentation. It is true that landscape plans are characteristically missing from twentieth-century archives (for example, there are none of Beatrix Farrand's plans for her landscapes at Yale University). A common explanation for this phenomenon is that landscapers did not draw plans because they put out markers directly on the site. The scarcity of landscape plans at Cranbrook, however, is thrown into relief because the Cranbrook archives provide remarkable coverage of all the architectural work at the site. Similarly, the explanation that landscape plans are easily lost because they are given out to those installing or maintaining them does not hold up; this is also the case for architecture, and architectural plans are all available in the Cranbrook files. We know that the landscapers did draw up plans—there are numerous references to them in the written documents.<sup>76</sup> But what we see at Cranbrook, where perhaps only twenty to twenty-five percent of the work is to be found in plan form, is the likelihood that the drawn plans were not kept or preserved because of the devaluation of landscape.

What role did the gradual shift from the Arts and Crafts to the modern movement have in this decline? Though Cranbrook's Arts and Crafts roots and origins remain clear throughout in landscape, sculpture, and architecture, it is also clear that in those arts there was a gradual shift over time of forms, materials, and concepts to those of the modern movement. Though it is not within the scope of this paper to enter into a discussion of the

76. See n. 15 and the 19 May 1910 letter from Corfield to Booth; another example is Simonds's reference to the plans for his forest plantings (only the plan for one section remains).

modern, a brief analysis of the effects of its appearance may be useful.

In architecture, the art academy buildings of Saarinen are clear expressions of the modern movement. In sculpture, Carl Milles's disengagement with the architecture and closer ties with the landscape mark an important modern shift. But because his sculpture remained representational, it is considered as part of the earlier Arts and Crafts era. (Sculpture ultimately also lost its place and importance within the modern movement but recovered earlier than landscape.) Landscape, however, was negatively affected by the shift to the modern: its scope was reduced, topography received less attention, and any contour modifications became engineering work based on considerations such as road construction, erosion, or drainage mitigation. Only where an Arts and Crafts connection remained—as in the design for courtyards, did landscapes professionals still have some latitude. These, though spatially defined by the architect, still had the aesthetic intent of interweaving land and building and, therefore, a critical conceptual role. As the Cranbrook courtyards became less defined, however, they lost their meaningful roles of passage and intermediary.

Besides this limitation of landscape's scope, there are two other factors to be mentioned: one is the two-dimensionality of the design that accompanied the treatment of exterior space in the modern movement; the other is the appearance of industrial processes. We can glean something of both these changes in Loja Saarinen's work: in the careful two-dimensional color tapestries which she designed for the planting beds of the art academy; and in the fact that the plants for these areas were modern hybrids, grown in the greenhouse of a commercial establishment (the Weber Nursery), and as annuals, replaced every year.

Perhaps one of the only places at Cranbrook where a shift to the



Fig. 26. Norway maples, one-species bosk, 1993, (Diana Balmori)

modern did not reduce the scope of the earlier Arts and Crafts aesthetic was the portico of the art academy. The success of this superb set of spaces is truly modern in form, and much credit is to be given to Saarinen. But without Arts and Crafts-driven design decisions—George and Henry Booth’s topographical choice of placing the academy at the top of the hill and Simonds’s large pine planting around the Greek theater—the courtyard could not have become the continuously enclosed, elongated space that accommodated the stepped, sculptural fountains of Milles. The fact of landscape’s decline at Cranbrook makes clear the reason for the little attention it has heretofore received and its exclusion from the 1983 history. But having established this fact, it becomes important to show the value of the now-visible landscape by a reexamination of what we have seen.

Landscape is a critical ingredient in the success of Cranbrook’s aesthetic image, whose effectiveness is due to the integration of architecture and sculpture with landscape. This integration, the foremost ideal of the Arts and Crafts movement, is the common achievement of all the creators of Cranbrook. As such, the landscape gives physical expression to the institution’s educational ideal. There are few places of which this can be said. Here, the arts are visible, landscape is one of them, and they are at work in an environment where the arts are being taught and experienced.

The Arts and Crafts influence is also seen in the large-scale work of Cranbrook’s initial phase, when its ideas were dominant, assertive, and clear. Done early in Cranbrook’s creation, this work provided the landscapers with enough leeway to shape the topography and set up its basic image. In particular, the early Cranbrook roads (1905–15) shaped the landscape in ways similar to those of the best-designed roads in the nation, such as the Taconic, Merritt, and Blue Ridge parkways of the 1920s and 1930s, and they were designed by landscapers with aesthetic aims.

Overall, Arts and Crafts ideas affected both the first and second of Cranbrook’s landscapes, and the differences between the two can be described as a division in scale and in idea. The first, larger landscape, illustrates the ideas of the vernacular, the tie to region and site. The idealized Gothic model, with its fusing of different arts, fed the design of the more contained second landscape, which is a more overt expression of Arts and Crafts aims. At one level, the application of Arts and Crafts principles carried out ideologically the remnants of an eighteenth-century Picturesque vision. But at another, it sought to make the transition between architecture and landscape in a different manner, through the intermediate space of the courtyard. But even at Cranbrook, the separation of the arts, which was the final legacy of the Picturesque movement, was brought into a fragile, fleeting unity for

only a brief moment; this revitalization was possible because a group of professionals in each of the various arts shared a set of beliefs and had unity as a goal. With the emergence of the modern movement, the beliefs and goals of these arts again broke apart.<sup>77</sup>

Finally, we return to the earlier experience of the Cranbrook landscape, to consider how a landscape works upon us and how to identify those elements that draw us into a bond of affection with it. My initial experience was random, an unexamined, imprecise choice, followed by a moment that fixed the experience in memory. The connecting point was a fall day and a walk through a forest of bright yellows—more specifically, through a one-species bosk of Norway Maples, its golden leaves yellowing still further the sun's light as through stained glass (Fig. 26). This moment of connection was essentially dependent on design, so that we can conclude that design is of considerable importance. But yet another element critical to creating the bond seems to have had to do with what that landscape allowed. At Cranbrook, the landscape permitted, and even invited, one's walking, day-dreaming, drawing, and writing within it. Once formed, the bond

77. Unlike many American campuses, Cranbrook was not torn apart by an expansion of facilities in the 1960s. In this period in which landscape was eclipsed, campus design attended only to buildings. The reemergence of landscape makes possible again the joint consideration of building and landscape, a consideration critical to Cranbrook's future.

was sustained because the activity of one's life unfolded in and with it.

As I recollect my initial moment of charged sensibility in the present time of writing about Cranbrook, details emerge: my choice of the first landscape rather than the second, for example; the sense of well-being that accompanied my days there. The choice was related to a perception that the courtyards belonged to a building and its occupants and, therefore, were private; the sense of well being was an outcome of the writing and drawing which the site seemed to foster. The site, it seems to me now, supported these activities: spaces invited one to remain, for no large paths imparting a sense of sequence or destination traversed them, and, therefore, each space was a destination. Its beauty was independent of scenic vistas and the passivity that such vistas imply. It was neither recreational (having no facilities) nor instructional; nevertheless, it allowed a person not formally attached to Cranbrook in any capacity, to spend an afternoon there peacefully writing and drawing.

These traits which have emerged in recollection made Cranbrook a catalyst in one critical moment, and, eventually, an object worthy of study. And while it was not alone in bringing about survival, it provided an environment for the slow, solitary work of examining the shape a life could have.