

Historic Landscape Report

OLANA STATE HISTORIC SITE HUDSON, NEW YORK

a museum property of:

New York State
Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Taconic State Park Region

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Prepared and authored by:

Robert M. Toole
Landscape Architect

The Office of R.M. Toole
215 Regent Street
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
(518) 584-0727

Review Committee

James A. Ryan - Olana Site Manager, OPRHP

Thomas Ciampa - Landscape Architect, Taconic Region, OPRHP

Kristin L. Gibbons - Research Analyst, Bureau of Historic Sites, OPRHP

Margaret Davidson - Chair, Landscape/Viewshed Committee, Friends of Olana

Karen Zukowski - Olana Curator, Friends of Olana

Dorren Martin - Assistant Olana Curator, Friends of Olana

Clayton Andrus - Olana Grounds Superintendent, OPRHP

Guest Reviewers (for Sections I, II and III)

Charles E Beveridge - Series Editor, Olmsted Papers, American University

John K. Howat - Laurence A. Freishman Chairman of the Departments
of American Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Robin Karson - Executive Director, The Library of American Landscape History

Francis R. Kowsky - Professor, Fine Arts Department, SUNY Buffalo

David Schuyler - Professor, American Studies Program,
Franklin and Marshall College



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FOREWORD

David Huntington, the insightful scholar who led the campaign to save Olana from dispersal in the mid-1960s, wrote admiringly of the texture of the Olana topography. In The Landscapes of Frederic Edwin Church (1966), he speculated on the deteriorating landscape, describing how it must have been experienced in the past:

the richness of visual incident: surprises and discoveries, concealments and revelations, the foreground engages the eye one moment, the distance the next; one view is close and intimate, another, open and vast. The action which Church suggests in his paintings is realized at Olana in three dimensions.

Huntington concluded that Olana “is the absolutely unique creation of one personality.”

With this statement, Dr. Huntington attributed the landscape design at Olana to Frederic Church. Through the years, however, other commentators have not found the landscape significant or have believed that it was the work of Calvert Vaux or Frederick Law Olmsted. Through his exhaustive research undertaken in the archival materials at Olana and on the grounds themselves, landscape architect Robert M. Toole puts these misattributions finally to rest. All his evidence attests to Church’s direct involvement in the creation of every aspect of this landscape work of art.

Research for Toole’s historic landscape report was initiated in 1984 when he was hired by the Bureau of Historic Sites to provide an initial analysis of the property. This first report included a thorough description of the property, dividing it into component areas that would provide the basis for future analysis and discussion. Since then, the Bureau and the Friends of Olana have funded additional research on the Olana landscape. Support for the report that follows was provided by generous grants from The Prospect Hill Foundation, New York, and from the Friends of Olana.

Toole’s twelve years of research on the Olana property has led to an extraordinarily searching analysis of the process by which Church created his landscape. While Toole quickly confirmed that the landscape was Church’s design, his thoughts about the evolution of the landscape and changes in its design over time were evaluated and corrected as he probed more deeply, and interrelated documents with the land. Because his landscape was an ephemeral art, one may only speculate about some aspects of Church’s design. Other aspects are well documented. With this report, we can now be certain that Church’s achievements as a landscape designer match the achievements he realized as an architect for his house and its interiors. At Olana, Church created an earthscape of significance.

I wish to express my gratitude to the members of the review committee who oversaw the research and writing of this report. I also wish to thank the distinguished guest reviewers whose comments were so important in focusing and refining the final document. Finally, I am grateful to Robert Toole for his personal and intellectual commitment in creating this extraordinary report. His work provides us with a new understanding of the Olana landscape.

James A. Ryan
Site Manager
Olana State Historic Site

December, 1996

Abbreviations

Repositories:

AIHA - McKinney Library, Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, NY
BHS - Bureau of Historic Sites, OPRHP, Peebles Island, Waterford, NY
CCD - Columbia County Deeds, Court House, Hudson, NY
CCHS - Columbia County Historical Society
CCM - Columbia County Mortgages, Court House, Hudson, NY
CCW - Columbia County Wills, Court House, Hudson, NY
DHA - David Huntington Archive, Olana State Historic Site
NYSOPRHP - New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
OSHS - Olana State Historic Site (non-archival collections)
USDA - United States Department of Agriculture
VML - Vedder Memorial Library, Greene County Historical Society, Coxsackie, NY

Historical Persons:

EC - Emma Carnes (1810-1886)	JC - Joseph Church (1793-1876)
EDP - Erastus Dow Palmer (1817-1904)	LPC - Louis Palmer Church (1870-1843)
FEC - Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900)	SGC - Sally Good Church (1868-1964)
FJC - Frederic Joseph Church (1866-1914)	TC - Theodore Cole (1838-1928)
ICB - Isabel Church Black (1871-1935)	WHO - William H. Osborn (1820-1894)
ICC - Isabel Carnes Church (1836-1899)	

Contemporary Persons:

ARF - Albert R. Fromberger	LMcL - Linda McLean
CLF - Charles L. Fisher	LJB - Lloyd J. Boice
CLW - Conrad L. Wirth	NJF - Nichol J. Forsht
CTL - Charles T. Lark, Jr.	PRH - Paul R. Huey
DCH - David C. Huntington	RMT - Robert M. Toole
DW - Dennis Wentworth	RS - Richard Slavin
EMcL - Ellen McClelland Lesser	TC - Thomas Ciampa
HJD - Harold J. Dyer	WEW - Wilbur E. Wright
JAR - James A. Ryan	WGT - William G. Tyrrell
JGW - John G. Waite	WW - Wally Workmaster
KLK - Kristin L. Gibbons	
KL - Kenneth Lutters	

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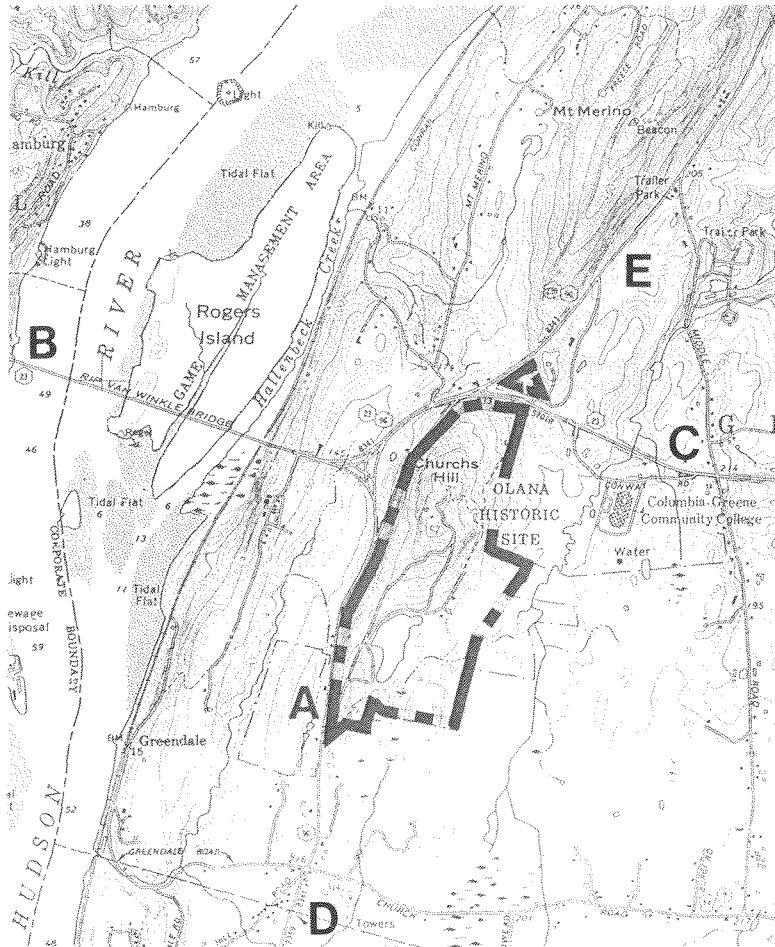
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Location Plan



Key to Symbols:

- A** South Entrance
(modern entrance)
- B** Rip VanWinkle Bridge
(west to Thruway, Exit 21)
- C** Rt. 23 to Taconic Parkway
- D** Rt. 9G south to Rhinebeck
- E** Rt. 9G north to Hudson

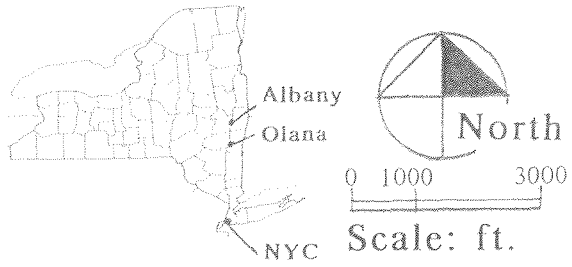


Figure 1 - Location Plan, by R.M. Toole, 1996.

INTRODUCTION

How pleasant it must be to have a home of one's own, where one's work all tells for future times.

- Louis L. Noble to Frederic Church, 8/29/1862

The Setting

Located on the Hudson River about 20 miles south of Albany (fig. 1), Olana was the estate property of Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900), his wife Isabel Mortimer Carnes (1838-1899) and their children (fig. 3). Olana is today a New York State Historic Site comprising about 336 acres.¹ This total includes land not owned by Frederic Church at the time of his death in 1900 (fig. 2). These more recently acquired, contiguous parcels are not considered part of the historic landscape and, while discussed, are not a focus of this report.

Historic Olana is the approximately 250 acre property acquired and developed by Frederic Church over a forty year period, 1860 to 1900. It is today considered a historic, designed landscape and a work of 19th-century landscape gardening.² It is attributed to Frederic Church, an important artist of the Hudson River School of painters. In turn, Church was aided, influenced and supported by Isabel Church, and others, as discussed

¹ Acreage is based on a survey entitled: "Olana Historic Site," by Rockefeller & Nucci, L.S., (map #21-A-75), scale: 1"=400' (fig. 2) [administrative files, Olana State Historic Site - hereafter cited as OSHS].

² U.S. Dept. of the Interior (hereafter cited as USDI), National Park Service, National Register Bulletin #18 / How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes, not dated (c. 1987), p. 2. The critical criteria reads as follows:

For the purposes of the National Register, a designed historic landscape is defined as a landscape that has significance as a design or work of art; was consciously designed and laid out by a master gardener, landscape architect, architect, or horticulturist to a design principle, or an owner or other amateur using a recognized style or tradition in response or reaction to a recognized style or tradition; has a historical association with a significant person, trend, event, etc. in **landscape gardening** or landscape architecture; or a significant relationship to theory or practice of landscape architecture [author's emphasis].

As will be shown in this report, the term "landscape gardening" was first used in England in the 18th century to describe the design of expansive residential grounds. While it had the same meaning in early-19th century America, the term landscape garden emphasized design intent and was somewhat technical for common usage. The terms "pleasure grounds" or "residential grounds" were sometimes used. As specified in the USDI criteria, these were "estate grounds" that might include "a farm where the primary significance is as a landscape design and not as historic agriculture," National Register Bulletin #18, p. 2.

Note that the term "landscape architecture" was coined around 1863 by Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted - letter: Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted to Board of Commissioners (New York City), 5/12/1863, as quoted in Norman T. Newton, Design on the Land, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 273. Vaux and Olmsted used the new term to distinguish the professional practice of landscape gardening which they were then providing in the design and development of New York City's Central Park. Landscape Architecture had its direct roots in the earlier practice of residential landscape gardening.

herein. The Olana landscape created by Church was one of the artist's finest artistic works. While a departure from his painting, landscape gardening at Olana utilized a long-evolving design style that had close aesthetic and historical ties to Frederic Church's painterly pursuits (see: Section I - Historical Background). Olana was formed as a unified landscape that included the Persian-style house and immediate grounds, a sizable working farm, as well as extensive parklands and woodlands, a large artificial lake and over five miles of carriage drives that provided planned access throughout the property, presenting myriad views over Olana and outward to the wider landscape in all directions.

Creating Olana's Designed Landscape

In 1860, his fame and financial success assured, Frederic Church purchased a 126 acre farm near the site of his early rambles in the Hudson Valley. With his young wife Isabel, he began the development of a residential farm property whose landscape design merged and harmonized natural and pastoral themes as an expression of an ideal. As part of that expression, the quest for beauty focused on landscape design practiced as a fine art.

Over the next decades, Frederic Church, with the financial backing of his wealthy father and a substantial income from his art, created Olana as a unified residential estate. He accumulated the estate property over a period of eighteen years, making a half-dozen or more land transactions, following a consistent plan (see: Section II - Property History During Church's Lifetime). The initial purchase amounted to about half the final acreage and was an existing farm, called the Wynsant Brezie farm after its original owner, that included an old farmhouse, several outbuildings, related fields, orchards, a small woodlot and a large area of swampy ground. With the exception of the wet area, the farm property was sited on moderately sloping ground and extended up to the high ground along a dominant ridge. In the early decades, Frederic and Isabel Church actively involved themselves in farm life. Living close to the farm operations in a cottage built in the first year of ownership, Church directed construction of new farm buildings and modified the earlier subsistence farm, developing fruit, vegetable and flower gardens that suited his agricultural and aesthetic interests. The land was extensively farmed and was a modest but economically viable agrarian enterprise. The Churches called the property "the Farm" throughout their lifetime, testifying to agriculture's essential role in the property's sense-of-place.

While the farm evolved, Frederic Church dedicated half his original purchase, about 60 acres, to the development of the Lake,³ and a park located on the southeast facing hillside.⁴ In 1867, Church purchased the 18-acre wooded summit of the dominant ridge with its panoramic overlook of the Hudson Valley. Here he built his House beginning in 1870.⁵ This purchase was followed immediately by the acquisition of a narrow 6-acre strip of land that provided access to the north, linking with the public road toward the City of Hudson. The development of this primary entrance combined with the farm and the house construction to establish Olana as a roughed-out landscape design composition by the late 1870s. It was then that Church made his last important land acquisitions - the 1877 purchase of a 9-acre parcel at the southwest corner of the property, which became the South Entrance, and the 1878 purchase of the 50-acre north slope of the dominant hill, the so-called north meadow. By 1880, the Lake was completed and over several years Church added miles of roadway to the property, pleasure drives as he himself said, “opening new and beautiful views.” From this point until his death in 1900, especially in the five years before his 65th birthday in the spring of 1891, Church refined and substantially completed landscape gardening on the site. In 1886, Church’s son, Frederic Joseph Church, illustrated the nearly finished work on a rendered plan (fig. 22 and cover illustration) that depicted not only Olana’s boundaries, roads, buildings and major features -- and gave us the proper names for many of these -- but also indicated the essential visual and spatial characteristics of the landscape garden composition, the extent of woodland and clearing, tree patterns and the use of farmland, all as intended by Frederic Church at age 60. With some additions, this plan documents the situation at the end of Church’s lifetime, fourteen years after it was drawn (see: Section III - Design Description).

The landscape garden design of this renowned landscape painter is preserved at Olana. As will be discussed ahead, this property, and a few other early Romantic period (roughly 1800 to 1860s) garden compositions that remain in the Hudson River Valley are at the center of historic events that decisively shaped the concept of scenic beauty in America.

³ Church habitually called this the lake, although it was also described as a pond on occasion. As described in the text, the name “Lake” will be used throughout this report. As discussed individually, names used in the Olana Historic Landscape Report adhere to Church’s use, and these names are capitalized. Where Church’s nomenclature is inconsistent or unknown, a consistent name has been selected for the purposes to this report, however these names are not capitalized.

⁴ While there is no documentation that Church used the name “park” to describe this area, others did use the term and the area clearly exhibited park-like characteristics. In keeping with the principle above, the name “park,” will be used consistently for the purposes of this report without capitalization. For a handy reference to names used in this report, see: Appendix B - Glossary of Terms.

⁵ Again, the name “House” will be used consistently. It is capitalized because the name was used by Church.

These gardens are seen as a distinctly New York State cultural phenomenon. Olana reflects not only one man's creativity but also the artistic and spiritual values of this place and time. As such, the Olana landscape is a rare and important artifact of national significance.⁶

While Olana exemplified the ideals of an era, its loveliness results from the skill and sensibilities of its designer, Frederic E. Church. That the most successful member of the Hudson River School of painters designed this landscape garden is exceptionally fitting. Frederic Church was uniquely qualified and supremely suited to create what is certainly one of the finest surviving 19th-century landscape garden designs in the USA. In turn, the artistic principles of the Hudson River School of landscape painting provided nationally significant underpinnings for the practice of landscape gardening.

Stewardship

After 1891, the Churches' son, Louis P. Church (1870-1943), supervised the property with his father's involvement until Frederic Church died in 1900. Thereafter, Louis and his wife, Sally Good Church (1868-1964), remained at Olana as stewards of Frederic Church's legacy, providing a transition to the future (see: Section IV - Property History After Church's Lifetime). Even before 1900, landscape design in the so-called "Country Place Era"⁷ was guided by shifting tastes toward neoclassical themes and forms -- ideas at odds with the aesthetic that motivated Frederic Church. While Louis and Sally Church appreciated the new fashion in garden art, they kept Olana in a way sympathetic to Frederic Church's intentions. The property's use did not change. The land remained intact. While farming slowed and was eventually abandoned, with some outbuildings removed, no wholesale alterations in the site layout were made. The Lake and park received subtle

⁶ USDI, National Register Bulletin #18, p. 6. A designed, historic landscape is considered of national significance when it is:

- a. associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history; b. associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or c. embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or d. have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Points "b" and "c" are particularly relevant to Olana, but all apply.

⁷ For a concise summary of landscape and garden design in the misleadingly named "Country Place Era" see: N. Newton, Design on the Land, Chapter XXX, "The Country Place Era," pp. 427-446; and Robin Karson, The Muses of Gwinn, Sagaponack, NY: Sagapress, Inc., 1995, especially: "Formal and Informal Design in the Country Place Era," pp. 7-13. The term "Country Place Era," coined by Newton, is confusing because it post-dates the American country estates developed in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

changes and a more formal, architectonic garden was added close to the House. When Louis died in 1943, maintenance slackened; Sally Church's role ended with her death in 1964. At that point the House and its contents were threatened by imminent auction. A public campaign led to the preservation of the property and its invaluable collections. Fortunately, the landscape that constituted Olana was also saved. State ownership was achieved in 1966 and today, with its lands generally intact and with a high level of design integrity remaining, this designed, historic landscape artifact is preserved as a New York State Historic Site, supported by a Friends group with nearly 700 members (see: Section V - Existing Conditions). In 1996, Olana celebrated its 30th anniversary as a museum property dedicated to interpreting the life and work of Frederic Edwin Church. In total, with its House, collections and landscape, Olana is considered a historic property of unusual importance.⁸

The preservation of Olana's historic landscape in a rural setting still sympathetic to the countryside of a hundred years ago is remarkable given the pace of landscape change in the Hudson Valley over the past century. The site's importance lies in its value as an educational and recreational resource in the context of a region that nurtured Frederic E. Church and the other members of the Hudson River School. Representative of the Romantic period, Olana preserves its heritage as a unique artifact of this fleeting but inspired period of the young United States. While its landscape is in many ways altered, the incongruities are easily reversible and Olana survives as a beautiful, artistic place.

In the past, the Hudson River Valley's Romantic period, designed landscapes, and Church's design at Olana, have not been given the recognition that their significant status deserves. Many commentators neglect the landscape entirely, mistakenly referring to the Churches' house alone as Olana. Olana's landscape design is perhaps Church's least appreciated achievement. It is a singular work, and in his landscape gardening Church utilized his painterly background far more directly and completely than in his better known ventures into architecture. Landscape gardening at Olana, by a noted landscape painter, has international interest.

That this artifact has been overlooked may result from the natural appearance and ephemeral character of the designed landscape. In turn, landscape gardening was practiced as an art in the 19th century, but is today all but forgotten. The subtlety of this art form is difficult to appreciate. Ignorance of the design work Church put into the landscape leaves

⁸ Olana's significance was evaluated as part of a colloquium sponsored by the Friends of Olana to investigate the property's strengths and weaknesses as it plans for the 21st century. See: "Olana in the 21st Century: Report of a Colloquium on the Future of Olana State Historic Site," NYSOPRHP and Friends of Olana, September 29-30, 1995, and "Response to Questions About the Significance of Frederic E. Church and Olana," 9/29/1995 [OSHS].

the impression that it was all happenstance. Olana appears to be a natural occurrence, so successful has Church been at hiding the role of art on the land.

Only in recent decades have historic landscapes and gardens begun to receive the attention that their significance and educational potential deserve. Olana will no doubt be a familiar historic and open space resource for many decades to come. With the completion of this Olana Historic Landscape Report, New York State and the Friends of Olana can continue to preserve and restore this historic landscape in an authentic manner, and better present the property to enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of the legacy of Frederic Church and the heritage of the Hudson River Valley during Church's lifetime.

Project Objectives

The primary purpose of the Olana Historic Landscape Report is to document the history, intended use and design appearance of the Olana landscape during the residency of Frederic E. Church and his family. The overall goal is met by study objectives, to provide:

- A clear description of the principles and antecedents that determined Frederic Church's approach to landscape gardening at Olana.

- A detailed understanding of Frederic Church's landscape development at Olana (1860 to 1900), as well as the site conditions prior to Church's purchase, and the landscape history after Church's death to the present time.

- An accurate description of the layout and appearance of the Olana landscape, and an evaluation of Church's design intent as it was in the period 1860-1900.

- A comprehensive visual and written documentation of alterations to the landscape since 1900, as well as of current site conditions.

- An aid to the Olana State Historic Site for its evaluation of future management activities, such as maintenance, restoration and interpretation, at a site that reflects as closely as possible its use, layout and appearance during Frederic Church's lifetime.

Historic Research and Period Plan Methodology

In the broadest sense, study of Olana's designed landscape is based on familiarity with residential landscape and garden design as it evolved in the northeastern United States from the early-19th century. This is the context within which Olana was developed. Documentation specific to Olana was derived primarily from the David Huntington Archive (DHA) at the Olana State Historic Site (OSHS) (see, Appendix A - Selected Bibliography and Repositories Consulted). Study of the Olana landscape is based on a wide variety of

documentary sources, and on the existing conditions of the property that together explain the development of the landscape. The role of Frederic Church, the creator of the Olana landscape, is revealed through his writings and those of his close associates, examined to determine the chronology of the development, as well as Church's artistic motivations as reflected in his landscape design.

Research began with original source material such as deeds, maps and account ledgers. Frederic Church's voluminous correspondence includes numerous references to his involvement with the property throughout his residency and has provided invaluable evidence. Another important primary source of information are several contemporary articles published about Olana, which provide not only the specifics of Olana's development but also help us to understand Frederic Church's intentions. Pictorial materials, including numerous paintings, engravings and sketches of the property, are a valuable source of information, showing the appearance of the landscape during Church's residency. Care must be taken to evaluate the relevance and reliability of this documentation which does not have the factual exactitude of photographs. Crucially, there are hundreds of photographs of the property and recent dating of many of these images has confirmed their usefulness in determining the historic situation. Oral history recollections of those who knew the property in the period following Church's death are also informative, if only to show subsequent alterations. Together, these sources document the landscape in its period of primary historical significance - the last decade of Frederic Church's life.

The archival resources were checked against, and illuminated by, the physical evidence of today's site -- the existing conditions. A full topographic survey of the property was prepared in 1967 (fig. 115). Additional mapping was conducted using this base to provide accurate records and for detailed study of the physical situation as it is today. The Existing Conditions Plan (fig. 116) is based on survey information enhanced with on-site observations, measurements and annotations, notably of vegetation, site features and spatial characteristics. The Existing Conditions Plan serves as a graphic benchmark for the preparation of the Reconstruction Plan (1891-1900) (figs. 117 and 118), which illustrates the landscape as it is thought to have appeared in about the last ten years of Church's life. During the course of the study, the Reconstruction Plan was a working tool, identifying deficiencies in the documentation, and refining the ongoing study effort. The Reconstruction Plan will be important in contemplating future restoration projects, and for interpreting the landscape, since it portrays the historic landscape and its design appearance as compared to the site as it exists today (compare figs. 116 and 117).

The Olana Historic Landscape Report includes five narrative sections:

SECTION I - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: An essay that narrates landscape design history and describes Frederic Church's cultural background and his approach to landscape and garden aesthetics as related to period practice. This essay puts the Olana landscape into context and serves as an important basis for evaluating its significance.

SECTION II - PROPERTY HISTORY DURING CHURCH'S LIFETIME:

A chronologically arranged, factual description of Olana's landscape evolution from its pre-Church development as farmland until Church's death in 1900. This section provides the basis for the technical design description and also presents aspects of the Olana landscape, such as personnel and family use of the property, that are not discussed in subsequent sections, but are important to understanding and interpreting the landscape.

SECTION III - DESIGN DESCRIPTION: A narrative that describes the physical form, layout and intended design effects of Olana's landscape during the last years of Frederic Church's residency. The text is based on the scholarship and documentation presented in the site history (Section II, above). This narrative is fundamental for evaluating restoration potential because it articulates the historic situation.

SECTION IV - PROPERTY HISTORY AFTER CHURCH'S LIFETIME:

A chronologically arranged, factual description of Olana's landscape evolution from the time of Church's death to the present, showing how the landscape changed subsequently.

SECTION V - EXISTING CONDITIONS: A description of the present site conditions, comparing the current situation to the historic period before Frederic Church's death in 1900. This narrative uses the same organization as Section III - Design Description, wherein the historic situation is articulated and made explicit. Section V will discuss the Olana landscape within the context of its management by New York State's Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Throughout, the narrative is illustrated with numerous period illustrations and maps, as well as present-day photographs and maps prepared for this report. As discussed above, Frederic Church used a variety of names to identify various Olana landscape components. For the purposes of this report, names used to designate Olana landscape features have been selected based on their use by Church and his contemporaries. All names used on the 1886 Plan of Olana are used here as proper names. Other names known to have been used by Church are also capitalized. Where a designation was unclear, or unknown, an appropriate and consistent name, without capitalization, has been selected. A comprehensive glossary of terms appears in Appendix B. An Index at the end of the report will help to locate specific topics.

SECTION I - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

I have used the word landscape gardener; because in pursuance to our present taste in gardening, every good painter of landscape appears to me the most proper designer.

- William Shenstone, Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening, 1764

Again and again has it been said, that Landscape Gardening and Painting are allied.

- Andrew Jackson Downing, A Treatise on Landscape Gardening, 1844

In order to understand the designed landscape that constitutes Olana, it is necessary to place its creation within the English tradition of landscape gardening.⁹ Also, we must review Frederic Church's background, his experiences, motivations, and most importantly his art, all viewed within the context of landscape design in the Hudson River Valley in the decades before the Civil War.¹⁰

In this report, the Olana landscape will be described as a work of landscape gardening in the "Picturesque" design mode, a style defined and interpreted by America's notable landscape gardener of the mid-19th century, Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852).¹¹ But to understand Downing and his description of Picturesque landscape

⁹ The dictionary defines "landscape gardening" as: "The art or trade of designing or rearranging large gardens, estates." - Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed., 1987. The "landscape garden" has been defined as: "A naturalistic style of garden popular in the latter part of the 18th and the 19th centuries. It came about as a reaction from the grandiose, formal styles common in England and Europe during the Renaissance and later. The landscape garden style had perhaps its finest development in England under Humphry Repton, later in America under Andrew Jackson Downing, the elder Frederick Law Olmsted, and Jens Jensen." - Warner L. Marsh, Landscape Vocabulary, Los Angeles, CA: Miramar Publishing Co, 1964, p. 188. For a good discussion of the term "landscape garden," see: S. Lang, "The Genesis of the English Landscape Garden," in Nikolaus Pevsner, ed., The Picturesque Garden and Its Influences Outside the British Isles, Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1974, pp. 1-29.

For the English background of landscape gardening, see: John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis, eds., The Genius of the Place, The English Landscape Garden, 1620-1820, Cambridge MA: M.I.T. Press, 1990; David Jacques, Georgian Gardens, The Reign of Nature, Portland, OR: Timber Press, 1984; and R. P. Maccubbin and Peter Martin, eds., British and American Gardens in the Eighteenth Century, Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1984.

¹⁰ For an account of American landscape design in the period just prior to and during Church's residence at Olana, see: Therese O'Malley, "Landscape Gardening in the Early National Period," in Edward J. Nygren, ed., Views and Visions, Washington, D.C.: The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1986, pp. 133-159; and George B. Tatum, "Introduction: The Downing Decade (1841-1852)," and "Nature's Gardener," in George B. Tatum and Elizabeth Blair MacDougall, eds., Prophet with Honor, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1989, pp. 1-42 and pp. 43-80.

¹¹ Andrew Jackson Downing, Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America (hereafter cited as Landscape Gardening), New York, NY: George P. Putnam, 5th ed., 1854, pp. 61-84. Downing addressed the Picturesque design mode in Section II "Beauties and Principals of the Art" (the table of contents reads: "Beauties of Landscape Gardening"). Today, the word "picturesque" is

gardening, and to place Olana's landscape in context, there is a need to summarize the long history of landscape gardening that came before Frederic Church began his work at Olana in 1860, for indeed Church's work had long-established roots. This European and American history is traced here as follows:

Landscape and garden design emerged from the Roman epoch, through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, for over a thousand years, relying on symmetry and geometric layouts that dominated nature with artifice. Then, in the early decades of the 18th century, an irregular, naturalistic approach to garden design gained fashion in England -- called today the English landscape garden. Its first development occurred in the decades between 1720 and 1740. Early examples were often emblematic, that is, full of allusions to classical and literary themes reflected in statuary, follies and features, but these were carefully arranged on the land in order to respond to the "genius of the place"¹² at each garden site. This was a new idea, in many ways revolutionary, but while strict geometry was abandoned, gardens were still dominated by garden structures, other man-made features and an obviously man-made appearance. William Kent (1685-1748) was the era's notable designer, called "painter enough to taste the charms of landscape, . . . he leaped the fence, and saw that all nature was a garden."¹³ The relation of landscape painting was direct, with the works of artists Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), Nicolas Poussin (1594-1655) and Salvator Rosa (1615-1673) guiding the designer in incorporating classical temples and features into idyllic garden settings. As will be seen, these artists proved important to the landscape gardeners of the Hudson River Valley more than a century later.

By the time of the American Revolutionary War, England's greatest landscape gardener, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1783), and others, had further revolutionized

imprecise. For this reason, the capitalized version used in this report is given a precise meaning, as defined by Downing and described in this report as related to the 19th-century art of landscape gardening in the Hudson River Valley.

¹² Alexander Pope, "An Epistle to Lord Burlington" (1731), as quoted in Hunt and Willis, p. 212.

English poet Alexander Pope (1688-1744), pioneered the notion of the landscape garden, saying that, "all gardening is landscape painting," and called attention to its painterly principles with poetry:

Consult the Genius of the Place in all,
That tells the Waters or to rise or fall,
Or helps the' ambitious Hill the Heav'ns to scale,
Or scoops in circling Theatres the Vale,
Calls in the Country, catches opening Glades,
Joins willing Woods, and varies Shades from Shades,
Now breaks, or now directs, the' intending Lines;
Paints as you plant, and as you work, Designs.

¹³ Horace Walpole, The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening (1780), reprint, London: Brentnham Press, 1975, p. 22.

the earlier landscape gardens by making natural effects the dominant design components.¹⁴ Brownian landscape gardens were largely expansive, domesticated parks that limited the impact of man-made associative features, relying instead on the enjoyment of composed, idealized, pastoral scenery. In England, sophisticated gentleman farmers adapted this approach to their farming operations to realize the *ferme ornée* (ornamental farm), an English term (despite the French words) that was perfected in the decades 1760s to the 1780s. The idea of the *ferme ornée* was expressed at Olana a hundred years later.

In his writings, as at his own *ferme ornée*, 18th century English poet and landscape garden theorist, William Shenstone (1714-1762), reiterated important principles of Brownian landscape gardening.¹⁵ As the quotation beginning this section attests, Shenstone, as had others, saw the direct and pervasive link between the art of landscape painting and the art of landscape gardening. In 1770, influential English garden theorist, Thomas Whately, published Observations on Modern Gardening which went further by asserting that landscape gardening “is as superior to landscape painting, as a reality to a representation.”¹⁶ In 1772, English poet, William Mason, in The English Garden, confirmed the lofty place of landscape gardening in 18th-century taste, saying that the landscape gardener possessed “the poet’s feeling and the painter’s eye.”¹⁷ In 1780, English garden historian, Horace Walpole, wrote The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening, an important book that traced the development of English landscape gardening (which he called “the true model of gardening to the world”). As with the rest, Walpole’s interest in garden design evolved from his study of painting and his history was published as a 4th volume of his Anecdotes on Painting in England.¹⁸

¹⁴ ‘Capability’ Brown was famous in his own lifetime as England’s greatest landscape gardener. Because he did not produce a body of written principles, in 19th-century America his work was less well understood in its specifics than simply as a legend. Brown called himself a “place-maker,” indicating the importance of engendering a “sense-of-place” to a work of landscape gardening. It was this concern that created the great English estate grounds, as at Blenheim, Stowe, Stourhead, etc. Brown was called ‘Capability’ for his habit of telling clients that their properties had “capabilities” (i.e. potential) for ornamental landscape improvements.

¹⁵ William Shenstone developed his farm, The Leasowes, after 1743. The property influenced several generations of visitors and is today considered a landmark in the history of English landscape gardening. For background information on Shenstone, and other historical information regarding the English landscape garden, see individual entries (under place and person listings), in Patrick Goode and Michael Lancaster, eds., Oxford Companion Guide to Gardens, Oxford and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1986.

¹⁶ Thomas Whately, Observations on Modern Gardening (1770), as quoted in Hunt and Willis, p. 301.

¹⁷ William Mason, The English Garden (1772), as quoted in David Lambert, “‘The Poet’s Feeling’: Aspects of the Picturesque in Contemporary Literature / 1794-1816,” Garden History (Journal of the Garden History Society), Vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer, 1996), p. 84.

¹⁸ See: Mavis Batey, “Horace Walpole as Modern Garden Historian,” Garden History, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring, 1991), pp. 1-11.

Capability Brown's gentrified appreciation of nature in landscape gardening was followed by an interest in more varied, intricate and wilder, more truly natural situations. This evolution culminated in the 1790s with an emphasis on 'picturesque' experiences best found not in the landscape garden as much as in unsullied nature. A search for picturesque beauty -- like a picture -- was available to anyone out on a countryside tour.¹⁹ These tours were guided by the likes of William Gilpin (1724-1804), who analyzed the visual world in painterly terms and sought out English scenes that were reflective of landscape painting.²⁰ Initially, interest in the picturesque aesthetic had little relevance to garden design but encompassed perception of natural landscapes and outdoor scenery only. There was little motivation to insert picturesque situations into the Brownian landscape garden whose natural attributes were in any event often inferior to the waterfalls, crags and wild prospects that attracted picturesque touring. In fact, garden art had by then returned to a more overtly ornamental focus. Before the end of the 18th century, landscape designers such as Humphry Repton (1752-1818), Capability Brown's English successor, brought back some of the geometry and artificial forms banished in Brown's idealized naturalism. These changes were notable, especially in garden elements close to the house, and were made out of concern for elegance and status, in the name of good sense. "In whatever relates to man," wrote Repton in 1795, "propriety and convenience are not less objects of good taste than picturesque effect."²¹

But the purists who favored picturesque beauty challenged that accommodation and demonstrated how naturally-occurring, picturesque beauty could be made a theme of landscape garden design. The different approaches prompted the so-called "picturesque controversy."²² English writers and garden makers, such as Richard Payne Knight (1750-1824), Uvedale Price (1747-1829) and others, argued for a truly natural appearance in landscape gardening and were referred to as the "picturesque improvers."²³ Uvedale Price's ideas were especially persuasive and offer insights into Frederic Church's landscape gardening at Olana. Price focused on the practice of the art of the landscape

¹⁹ See: Malcolm Andrews, The Search for the Picturesque, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989.

²⁰ William Gilpin, Observations on the River Wye (1782), Observations on the Lakes (1789), and most importantly for landscape gardening, Remarks on Forest Scenery (1791).

²¹ Humphry Repton, Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening (1795), as quoted in Oxford Companion Guide to Gardens, p. 431.

²² Oxford Companion Guide to Gardens, p. 431.

²³ In recent years, there has been considerable scholarly study of the picturesque aesthetic and the late-18th century picturesque movement. As a sampling, see: Garden History, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Winter 1994) for articles dedicated to this discussion, especially: Mavis Batey, "The Picturesque: An Overview," pp. 121-131. Also: Stephen Daniels and Charles Watkins, eds., The Picturesque Landscape, Nottingham, England: University of Nottingham Press, 1994 and finally: The Picturesque (Quarterly Journal of the Picturesque Society, Hereford, England), issues from 1992.

painter to suggest: “the use of the picturesque in landscape gardening.”²⁴ Rejecting the “cold monotony of Mr. Brown,” Price championed the landscape artist, who, better than the “professional improver [i.e., landscape gardener],” studied the “neglect and accidents” of nature.²⁵ By doing so, Uvedale Price felt that artists were more successful in integrating natural effects -- picturesque effects -- into their painterly art, and that the artful study of nature was critical for those who would “improve” nature in the garden. Price concluded that “there is greater affinity between landscape painting, and landscape gardening, than appears in Mr. Brown’s work.”²⁶

One English practitioner of Price’s approach was William Sawrey Gilpin (1762-1843). Of interest in our focus on Frederic Church and Olana, W. S. Gilpin was also an English landscape painter. He was a nephew of William Gilpin, and he came to know Uvedale Price, who encouraged him to practice landscape gardening as a profession, which he did beginning in about 1806.²⁷ During the 1820s and 30s, W. S. Gilpin practiced as a landscape gardener and published a book entitled, Practical Hints Upon Landscape Gardening (1832) which detailed his method in applying “the principles of landscape painting to the improvements of real scenery.”²⁸ Indeed, W.S. Gilpin’s design approach was highly visual, not restricted to working from two-dimensional plans. This pictorial technique was used by Church in his work at Olana. Neither man was a horticulturist, but rather practiced what one period source described as, “the disposition of the external scenery of a country residence, . . . its leading principle . . . , being those of landscape painting.”²⁹ As with Church at Olana, Gilpin was not in the habit of producing written records of his proposals, or for preparing plans or illustrations that would communicate his ideas. Both artists worked directly to sculpt the situation at hand in a process of myriad scene making. At the time, it was said that Gilpin’s practice of advising on-site, without plans, was typical of “either professional or amateur painters . . . directing their attention to [landscape gardening].”³⁰ One admirer, unconcerned for formal plans, said that, “Mr. Gilpin’s practiced eye will give us the best advice.”³¹ This English practice of landscape gardening occurred when Frederic Church was a child.

²⁴ Uvedale Price, “A Letter to H. Repton, Esq.,” in Picturesque, No. 16 (Autumn, 1996), p. 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2. William Gilpin made a similar point when he said: “Apply to artificial landscape [i.e., the landscape garden] those observations which occur in [nature],” - Remarks on Forest Scenery (1791).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁷ Oxford Companion Guide to Gardens, pp. 227-228.

²⁸ As quoted in Sophieke Piebenga, “William Sawrey Gilpin (1762-1843),” Garden History, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Winter 1994), p. 177.

²⁹ The Quarterly Review (1821), as quoted in Piebenga, p. 181.

³⁰ Joshua Major, The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening (1852), as quoted in Piebenga, p. 179.

³¹ Letter: Harriet Sutherland to Ralph Sneyd, 1836(?), as quoted in Piebenga, p. 179.

While landscape gardening evolved with fashionable taste in England, the Hudson River Valley languished in the cultural doldrums of colonial America. In the Colonial period, the last remnants of geometric gardening is called today "Anglo-Dutch," because this style developed during the late 17th-century reign of William and Mary.³² The Anglo-Dutch tradition pre-dated the English landscape garden, so that it was decidedly conservative when applied to American residential estates after the Revolution. Anglo-Dutch gardening is best seen today in the reconstructed gardens at Williamsburg, Virginia (especially the reconstructed Governor's Palace, initially laid out in the 1710s),³³ and in the Hudson River Valley at such sites as Van Cortlandt Manor as it was developed in the years before the Revolutionary War by Philip Van Cortlandt (d. 1748).³⁴

In the Hudson Valley region, the earliest design work that can be described as being in the English tradition of landscape gardening is recognized in the 1790s, when the house (at this date always a classical design) began to be located away from the farmstead in a naturalized park-like setting, isolated from outbuildings, kitchen gardens and stable areas that had earlier been closely attached to the house. This was the Brownian tradition finally arrived in the provinces. It is well-illustrated at Hyde Park (today the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site), the Bard family estate developed in the late 1790s on the Hudson River 30 miles south of Olana.³⁵ It was also a design form seen on the better-documented properties developed by Livingston family members after the war ended, properties such as Oak Hill (1794), Massena (1797) and The Hill (1799),³⁶ all established in the neighborhood of the future Olana. While these and other properties were dominated by parkland and the separation of the house away from service and farm activities, aspects of more conservative and traditional practice -- Anglo-Dutch design -- persisted. For example, Hyde Park, and nearly all other residential properties developed in late eighteenth-century America, incorporated straight approach avenues rather than the curving alignments

³² For this background, see: David Jacques and Ared Jan van der Horst, The Gardens of William and Mary, London: Christopher Helm, 1988, and J. D. Hunt and Eric de Jong, "The Anglo-Dutch Garden in the Age of William and Mary," Journal of Garden History, Vol. 8, Nos. 2 and 3 (April-Sept., 1988).

³³ Peter Martin, The Pleasure Gardens of Virginia, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991, especially: "Gardens of Early Williamsburg" (Chapter 2), pp. 28-53.

³⁴ The Office of R.M. Toole, "Historic Landscape Study, Van Cortlandt Manor," Historic Hudson Valley, Tarrytown, NY, 1993, p.3.

³⁵ Patricia M. O'Donnell, Charles A. Birnbaum and Cynthia Zaitzevsky, Cultural Landscape Report for Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Volume 1: Site History, Existing Conditions, and Analysis, Boston, MA: National Park Service, 1992; and Robert M. Toole (hereafter cited as RMT), "Wilderness to Landscape Garden: The Early Development of Hyde Park," The Hudson Valley Regional Review (Bard College), Vol. 8, No. 2 (September, 1991), pp. 1-33.

³⁶ RMT, "'A Complete Fairy Land': Early Landscape Gardening in the Hudson River Valley," unpublished manuscript, 1995.

then widely utilized in English landscape design for these situations. There was also extensive use of tree rows, especially using Lombardy poplars, set out to form geometrical and clearly artificial arrangements.³⁷ For the wealthy and sophisticated land owners there appears to have been an emphasis on polished and embellished appearances, so that in otherwise rural circumstances drives close to the house were carefully raked and the turf was kept short and smooth, while new plantings included regularly spaced avenue trees and ornamental shrubberies. One motivation was to offer a contrast to wilderness conditions. As one commentator explained it in 1815:

In embellishing on country seats in the United States, where the features of nature have as yet undergone but little change, an appearance of human labor and skills, and even of formality, produces the agreeable effect of variety, and awakens the pleasing ideas of progressive civilization and improvement.³⁸

A point repeated in 1845: "It has often been remarked . . . , the geometric style is better suited to new country already abounding with natural scenery."³⁹

During the 1790s and into the early 1800s, while the "picturesque controversy" raged in England, local circumstances retarded the advance of the art of English landscape gardening in America. Eventually fashionable design themes were transferred across the Atlantic and incorporated into provincial practice. Signaling the new age, early American artist and art theorist, Samuel F. B. Morse, delivered his "Lectures on the Affinity of Painting with the other Fine Arts," at the Atheneum in New York City in 1826 (the year Frederic Church was born).⁴⁰ In his discourses, Morse included landscape gardening as one of five "perfect fine arts," the others being painting, sculpture, poetry and music. He remarked that landscape gardening was "little known or practiced in our Country,"⁴¹ and suggested that the landscape gardener:

possess the mind of the Landscape Painter, but he paints with the objects themselves. His is the art of hiding defects by interposing beauties; of correcting the errors of Nature by changing her appearance;

³⁷ The wide use of Lombardy poplars in post-Revolutionary War America was modelled on the columnar, Italian cypress (*Cypressus sempervirens*), an evergreen evoking classical scenes in the Mediterranean world but not hardy in the northern USA.

³⁸ anonymous author, "thoughts of a Hermit . . . , " The Port Folio, Vol. 6 (July, 1815), as quoted in Nygren, p. 25.

³⁹ The Cultivator (Albany, NY), Vol. 3, No. 2 (March, 1845), p. 83.

⁴⁰ Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., ed., Samuel F. B. Morse, Lectures on the the Affinity of Painting and the Other Fine Arts, Columbia, MI: University of Missouri Press, 1983. In the lectures, Morse borrowed heavily from Thomas Whately's Observations on Modern Gardening (1770) for his pronouncements on landscape gardening, attesting to the continuity of landscape garden theory over the previous half century.

⁴¹ Morse, p. 50, note [1-32].

of contriving at every point some consistent beauty so that the imagination in every part of the theatre of his performance may revel in a continual dream of delight. His main object is to select from Nature all that is agreeable, and to reject or change every thing that is disagreeable. Landscape Gardening is therefore a Fine Art.⁴²

As implied by Morse's comments, even in Frederic Church's childhood, Anglo-Dutch design themes still dominated landscape layouts, and landscape gardening was "little known or practiced." Beyond the immediate house grounds, the domesticated and wild natural settings of American estate residences provided readily available "attractive" scenery. In rural settings, wilderness nature was often a fundamental component of the American residential landscape. For the owners, ordered geometry and classical ornaments were valued counterpoints. At Hyde Park the landscape was by the 1820s and 1830s decorated with several classical features, small temples and a large classical urn mounted on an imposing pedestal (fig. 4). In America this was high-style in this period and Hyde Park was widely praised. Still, one visiting English writer offered Hyde Park as evidence to "place American landscape gardening immeasurably behind [England]."⁴³ This criticism indicated that by the 1830s the sort of trumped-up associative landscape wedded to imported classical bric-a-brac was getting stale in England. For a sensitive and knowledgeable visitor, Hyde Park was a disappointing and even tasteless rendition unworthy of the near-wilderness setting that so distinguished the Hudson Valley (as compared with long-cultivated England) in this unspoiled period. Attuned to the picturesque aesthetic, and the work of the "picturesque improvers," by then well established in English landscape design, the English commentator clearly felt the setting of Hyde Park called for a more appropriate and insightful design response.

Not long after the above critique of Hyde Park, after the lag necessitated by provincial life, the practice of landscape gardening in America melded with appreciation of the picturesque aesthetic to inspire the design of strikingly natural-appearing landscape gardens along the Hudson. These were then identified and codified, "Picturesque," by the era's most prominent landscape gardener, Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852).⁴⁴ It is Downing's use of the term Picturesque, and no other, that interests us in a discussion of

⁴² Ibid., p. 51. For a discussion of Morse's lecture and its relation to landscape gardening at Morse's home, Locust Grove, in Poughkeepsie, NY, see: The Office of R.M. Toole, "Locust Grove Historic Landscape Report," Young-Morse Historic Site, Poughkeepsie, NY, 1992, pp. 10-18.

⁴³ Patrick Shirreff, "A Tour through North America, Together with a Comprehensive View of the Canadas and the United States, As Adapted for Agricultural Emigration," *American Quarterly Review*, Vol. 18 (March-June, 1835), p. 382.

⁴⁴ For background on Downing, see: David Schuyler, *Apostle of Taste: Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815-1852*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Olana and when using the term with his definition it is capitalized.⁴⁵ It is unfortunate that the term “picturesque” has been used repeatedly in recent years to describe the broad tradition of English landscape gardening, even while its meaning for American landscape design was more precisely defined by Downing.⁴⁶ The broader use of the term picturesque has also included descriptions of historic sites as being of a “picturesque” styl, without clear meaning.⁴⁷

A.J. Downing, who lived at Newburgh-on-Hudson, is one of the Hudson River Valley’s most notable native sons, and an able spokesperson for landscape gardening in the years leading up to Church’s work at Olana. Frederic Church may not have been directly influenced by Downing’s ideas⁴⁸ but the world of gardening that Church would have been familiar with was described by Downing in his 1841 Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America, called, “the most popular and influential book of its kind ever published [in America].”⁴⁹ The implications of Downing’s definition of the Picturesque design style will be discussed shortly.

In the decades of Church’s formative young adulthood -- roughly the 1830s through the 1850s -- special circumstances contributed to focus on the Hudson River region as a paragon of natural scenic beauty and a center of landscape gardening.⁵⁰ Fundamental was the influence of Romanticism and its deeply felt appreciation for nature which influenced all the arts in the pre-Civil War decades (about 1820s to 1860).⁵¹ Romanticism influenced one’s reaction to the residential landscape. Romantic sentiment

⁴⁵ While clearly related, the picturesque aesthetic (note the use of lower case) encompasses perception of natural landscapes and outdoor scenery, a different concern than is implied by the artifice of Picturesque landscape gardening as it was narrowly defined in the writings of A. J. Downing. Use of the term Picturesque in this report refers to Downing’s definition only.

⁴⁶ So, for example, such articles as James D. Kornwolf, “The Picturesque in American Garden and Landscape Before 1800,” in R.P. Maccubbin and Peter Martin, pp. 93-106, used the term picturesque to refer to the broad landscape garden design tradition, not the infusion of irregular, truly-natural design work that emerged in England with the picturesque improvers in the mid-1790s, and that led to Downing’s definition of the Picturesque mode.

⁴⁷ See, for example, O’Donnell, et al., Cultural Landscape Report for Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, 1992. Note especially the imprecise treatment of the “picturesque style” on pages 1, 13, 54, 285-286 and 291-294.

⁴⁸ While there is no evidence that Frederic Church knew Downing or his work, such knowledge of Downing’s books and other published material, and even personal acquaintances with Downing is possible.

⁴⁹ George B. Tatum, “The Emergence of an American School of Landscape Design,” Historic Preservation, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C., Vol. 25, No. 2 (1973), p. 34.

⁵⁰ For a good discussion of landscape gardening on the Hudson, see: J. E. Spingarn, “Henry Winthrop Sargent and the Early History of Landscape Gardening and Ornamental Horticulture in Dutchess County, New York,” Yearbook (Dutchess County Historical Society), Vol. 22 (1937), pp. 36-37.

⁵¹ For general background, see: Hugh Honour, Romanticism, New York, NY: Penguin, 1981. For a discussion of Romanticism in the Hudson River Valley, see: Hans Huth, Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1957, especially Chapter 3, “The Romantic Period,” pp. 30-53.

defined the garden experience. For those who pursued landscape gardening the residential landscape was more than a utilitarian entity. When it became art, a garden had the potential to elicit an emotional response. Also, after the hardships of the Revolutionary War, in the relative prosperity and optimism of the Federal period, the wherewithal of Americans who practiced the art of landscape gardening (a limited few) increased dramatically by the time of Church's youth. New York City was a key to this connection. At the start of the 19th century, New York was on the verge of an economic and cultural boom that was distinguished by laissez-faire opportunities and a liberal cultural milieu, at least as compared to the more staid urban centers in New England, at Philadelphia or in the southern states.⁵² Prosperous New Yorkers responded to the romantic impulse of the period and found the *genius loci* of the Hudson River Valley to their liking. The land itself was the foundation from which landscape gardening proceeded. The Hudson Valley offered the evocative and varied landscapes and prospects prized by the landscape gardener intent on natural-appearing design work.

The fusion of ideas, money and place encouraged the practice of landscape gardening in the valley in the decades before the Civil War.⁵³ This period produced a knowledgeable chronicler of landscape gardening in Andrew Jackson Downing. His role on the Hudson was nearly unique and today, fortunately, we can return to his writings for a description of landscape gardening as practiced during the period leading up to Frederic Church's design at Olana. In the 2nd edition of Landscape Gardening (1844), Downing stated: "There is no part of the Union where the taste in Landscape Gardening is so far advanced, as in the middle portion of the Hudson."⁵⁴ In this discussion he distinguished between the "Geometric Style" of design (he also called it the "ancient school of gardening"), and the "Modern, Natural, or Irregular Style." The "ancient school" referred to what has been described as the Anglo-Dutch style -- the geometric style of the Colonial period. Downing contrasted these antiquated practices with "Modern," naturalistic landscape gardening as seen in the decade immediately prior to his publication of Landscape Gardening, the 1830s, when, as Downing declared: "Landscape Gardening was raised to the rank of a fine art" in America.

⁵² For this background see, for example: Manfred Janas and Robert V. Wells, New Opportunities in the New Nation, The Development of New York After the Revolution, Schenectady, NY: Union College Press, 1982.

⁵³ For a recent discussion of these themes, see: Adam Sweeting, Reading Houses and Building Books, Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1996.

⁵⁴ Downing, Landscape Gardening, New York: Wiley and Putnam, 2nd ed., 1844, p. 33. Subsequent quotes in this section are from the 2nd edition of Landscape Gardening unless otherwise stated.

In Section II of Landscape Gardening, entitled “Beauties and Principles of the Art [of Landscape Gardening],” Downing began to define the difference he found between landscape design that he called “Graceful or Beautiful,” on the one hand, and “Picturesque” on the other. Each was described as a design “mode,” or variation, within the “Modern, Natural, or Irregular Style.” “We conceive the two terms [i.e., Beautiful and Picturesque] will be found, at least for the moderate scale of the art with us, at once precise and significant,” wrote Downing in Landscape Gardening, and so today we find his discussion invaluable in understanding and interpreting landscape design in the Hudson Valley and at Olana.

As will be shown, the dichotomy that Downing saw between the Beautiful and the Picturesque had its direct foundations in earlier English aesthetic and landscape garden theory. In his book, Landscape Gardening, Downing called Humphry Repton “the first authority in the Graceful [Beautiful] School,” who advocated “a more polished and cultivated style.” The works of William Gilpin and Uvedale Price were also known to Downing, who linked Price especially with Picturesque landscape design, with Downing saying: “Price, whose work on the Picturesque is most full and complete, we consider the master, and able exponent of the Picturesque school.” It was in these terms that the contrast was drawn between the Beautiful and Picturesque design modes in America.⁵⁵ This background provides an international context for the history of landscape design as practiced in the Hudson Valley and at Olana.

Downing explained the difference between the Picturesque and Beautiful. He prefaced his discussion by saying that separate design modes led to “the different results which are to be sought after, . . . [i.e.] what kind of beauty we may hope to produce by Landscape Gardening.” While it was possible to mix the two design modes, with Downing saying they were capable of, “intermingling and combining,” he felt only one should be a “leading expression.” Otherwise, a jarring contrast might result in visual “bedlam.” It was the character of the site and the intentions of the designer, usually the property owner, that would determine the approach to be taken.

⁵⁵ In formulating the distinction between the Picturesque and the Beautiful, Downing had this to say of the English background: “[Uvedale Price at his property Foxley in Hereford] illustrated practically in a most complete manner what he enforced in his essay; viz. the superiority of Picturesque over merely elegant or beautiful nature; and the practicability of introducing it in grounds of a country residence. Brown & Repton, . . . were his [i.e. Price’s] opponents at the time, contending for the smooth and polished [i.e., Beautiful] alone” -letter: A. J. Downing to Robert Donaldson, 12/26/1840. [collection of Richard Jenrette, New York].

The Picturesque design produced: “outlines of a certain spirited irregularity; surfaces, comparatively abrupt and broken; and growth of a somewhat wild and bold character.” The Picturesque, summarized Downing, is:

an idea of beauty . . . strongly and irregularly expressed. . . [where] every object should group with another; trees and shrubs are often planted closely together; and intricacy and variety - thickets - glades - and underwood - as in wild nature, are indispensable. Walks and roads are more abrupt in their windings, turning off frequently at sudden angles. . . In water, all the wildness of romantic spots in nature. . . The keeping [i.e., maintenance] of such a landscape will of course be less careful than in the graceful [i.e., Beautiful] school. . . The lawn may be less frequently mown, the edge of the walks less carefully trimmed, where the Picturesque prevails.

In short, a Picturesque landscape, although man-made, would strive to achieve a natural appearance where the hand of the designer would be hidden. Downing suggested that the appeal of the Picturesque was not for everyone:

Artists, we imagine, find somewhat of the same pleasure in studying wild landscape, where the very rocks and trees seem to struggle with the elements for foothold, that they do in contemplating the phases of the passions and instincts of human and animal life. The manifestation of [nature’s] power is to many minds far more captivating than that of beauty.

In contrast, Downing’s definition of the Beautiful mode of landscape design shows little interest in wild nature or even a natural appearance. Instead, the Beautiful engendered, “the graceful outlines of highly cultivated forms of [individual] trees, and beautiful curves of surface and walks, in highly polished scenes.” This was a refined, clearly man-made appearance “characterized by curving and flowing lines,” and was “an idea of beauty calmly and harmoniously expressed . . . grass mown into a softness like velvet, gravel walks scrupulously firm, dry and clean, and the most perfect order and neatness should reign throughout” a Beautiful composition.⁵⁶ Downing used helpful illustrations to further explain the difference between the Beautiful and Picturesque design as separate “leading expressions” of landscape design (fig. 5).⁵⁷

⁵⁶ For Downing, the Beautiful approach was reflected in English, Regency period design and French influences popular in America in this period. Downing understood these themes from the writings of Humphry Repton, John Claudius Loudon and possibly others. For this background, see: Mavis Batey, Regency Gardens, Princes Risborough, England: Shire Publications, Ltd., 1995, especially pp. 31-35, and 43-47.

⁵⁷ In illustrating the distinction between the Beautiful and the Picturesque, Downing was not favoring one design approach over another, so that there cannot be said to be one ‘Downingesque style’ as has been asserted. Downing felt each “mode” could be pursued successfully provided the owner’s program and the circumstances of the site were compatible. Downing often advocated the Beautiful mode for urban

As a garden design mode, within the “Modern, Natural or Irregular Style,” Downing’s Picturesque was a subtle exercise in garden making. These designs were meant to evoke humility by hiding the role of art, and keeping the focus on nature and its spiritual connotations. The generalized picturesque scene, as manifest in wild nature, was widely regarded, but the true Picturesque landscape garden design was rare as it required refined sensibilities that conflicted with the popular perception of what domestic grounds and the garden experience should be. It seemed incongruous to create a truly natural appearance, especially near the house. On the other hand, many thought that the results of such an effort were not much of a garden. Downing felt that only one in a thousand were up to the task of appreciating the Picturesque landscape garden, which required “a certain artist-like feeling.” He also complained that Picturesque landscape gardening could go too far in ignoring art altogether, relying only on the unimproved natural circumstances.

Since the Colonial period, Americans had a general appreciation for tame and well-cultivated, well-ordered gardens, and gentrified nature, a testimony to their enthusiasm for settlement over wilderness. One built a beautiful garden, nature provided wilderness in an overabundance. Appreciation for idealized nature in the designed landscape gained favor only slowly as the 19th century progressed and the forests receded. Even after Downing asserted, in the 4th edition of Landscape Gardening (1849), that the Picturesque mode was “beginning to be preferred,” there remained a strongly felt desire for refined and embellished gardens. Downing’s Beautiful mode answered to a clear majority who desired a more obviously ornamental landscape garden experience. If there was a typical estate residence in the 1860s it combined a more Beautiful appearance close to the house which set the “leading expression,” with an often haphazard reliance on natural effects away from the house grounds. The weight of evidence from study of American landscape gardening in the antebellum period indicates that for those who actually undertook this art form, a “leading expression” in the Picturesque design mode was not a common occurrence. Many preferred the Beautiful themes in landscape gardening and the Picturesque mode remained only one approach. Today, few representative examples can be identified.

It is, therefore, of special note that the Picturesque distinguished landscape design in the Hudson River Valley.⁵⁸ This design work joins with the region’s notable cultural

situations and even in areas of rural country as a counterpoint to the general scenery. Downing’s only known, extant work, a portion of Matthew Vassar’s property, Springside, in Poughkeepsie, New York, was a landscape garden in the Beautiful mode. See: RMT, “Springside: A.J. Downing’s only extant garden,” Journal of Garden History, Vol. 9, No. 1 (January-March, 1989), pp. 20-39; and, The Office of R.M. Toole, “Springside Historic Landscape Report,” Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc., and Scenic Hudson, Inc., Poughkeepsie, NY, 5/20/1987, pp. 42-47.

⁵⁸ For this background see: RMT, “Picturesque Landscape Gardening in the Hudson River Valley, New York State,” The Picturesque, No. 10 (Spring, 1995), pp. 1-11; and Raymond J. O’Brien, American

achievements in the Romantic period, complementing not only the paintings of Thomas Cole and Frederic Church and the other members of the Hudson River School, but also the writings of Washington Irving and the Knickerbockers, the poetry of Nathaniel Parker Willis and William Cullen Bryant, and the irregular, picturesque architecture of A. J. Davis, A. J. Downing, Calvert Vaux and many others.⁵⁹ Together these artistic expressions defined the genius of the place in the Hudson River Valley in America's Romantic period, and to the present time. Today, the picturesque aesthetic, and Picturesque landscape gardening -- remembering the distinction in these terms -- are recognized as key inspirations behind the development of America's late 19th-century urban parks, beginning at Central Park in New York City (1858).⁶⁰ Picturesque sensibilities were also imbibed in the early history of the conservation movement, and in the creation of the National and State park systems of the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

The story of Picturesque landscape gardening in the Hudson River Valley was written by informed amateurs. Downing -- a professional -- was nearly unique, although his direct role in actually creating designed landscapes was very limited. For our study of Olana, Downing's importance is as an expert theorist and reporter, not a practitioner. One individual who did pioneer Picturesque design work in the Hudson River Valley was Washington Irving. Irving's design ideas were formed well before A. J. Downing had reached adolescence.⁶¹ Irving developed his small ornamental farm and *cottage ornée*, Sunnyside, in Tarrytown, beginning in 1835,⁶² pre-dating Downing's published works. Both Downing and Irving were influenced by the same English background, and it can be shown that Irving included Picturesque landscape garden effects in the ravine of Sunnyside

Sublime: Landscape and Scenery of the Lower Hudson Valley, New York: Columbia University Press, 1981, pp. 184-190; and Walter L. Creese, The Crowning of the American Landscape, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985, pp. 43-98.

⁵⁹ Jane B. Davies, "Davis and Downing: Collaborators in the Picturesque," in Tatum and MacDougall, pp. 81-123. Picturesque landscape gardening was inexorably tied to its use in association with picturesque architecture in the Hudson River Valley. This was introduced in the 1830s, notably by Alexander Jackson Davis (1803-1892) who published a pattern book entitled, Rural Residences, in 1838. A. J. Davis, who was a fine watercolorist as well as America's foremost architect of irregular Gothic and Italianate houses, may have been in the mind of A. J. Downing when he wrote in Landscape Gardening: ". . . the architect and the landscape painter are seldom combined in the same person, or are seldom consulted together. It is for this reason that we so rarely see a country residence, or cottage and its grounds, making such a composition as a landscape painter would choose for his pencil."

⁶⁰ Calvert Vaux, co-designer of Central Park with Frederick Law Olmsted, said the park was, "the suggestion of the Kaatskills," attesting to the Picturesque approach used in aspects of the park's design.

⁶¹ The Sketch Book (1819), included Irving's regional stories "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." This work also included an essay on landscape gardening as related to English country life, published when Andrew Jackson Downing was four years old.

⁶² RMT, with Jacquetta M. Haley, "Sunnyside Historic Landscape Report," Historic Hudson Valley, Inc., Tarrytown, NY, 1995, and RMT, "An American Cottage Ornée: Washington Irving's Sunnyside," The Journal of Garden History, Vol. 12, No. 1 (January-March 1992), pp. 52-72.

Brook, where he created an elaborate rustic path system, installed rustic seats and focused on natural features (e.g., a “haunted oak”) that reflected his imaginative writings. Close-by, in 1838, William Paulding, a former New York City mayor, and his twenty year-old son, Philip Paulding, worked with Alexander Jackson Davis at their property Knoll (today Lyndhurst). Davis designed a Gothic Revival house and discussed the site’s “agreeable diversity” and a “remarkably picturesque lawn of rock and clump.”⁶³ Elsewhere in the 1830s, a wealthy patron named Robert Donaldson developed Blithewood (Annandale-on-Hudson). He introduced Downing to A. J. Davis and favored a Picturesque design in his landscape along the gorge of the Sawkill.⁶⁴ During the 1840s, several notable examples of Picturesque landscape gardening can be recognized, all with Picturesque houses. Near Albany was Kenwood, with a Gothic Revival house designed by A. J. Davis in 1841 and a Picturesque landscape, described and illustrated by A. J. Downing, that included a “rustic pavilion” and “a pretty bridge, constructed of the roots and stems of the trees felled in opening the road.”⁶⁵ In 1847, artist, art theorist, and by then wealthy inventor of the telegraph, Samuel F. B. Morse, developed Locust Grove in Poughkeepsie with an extensive Picturesque style river front.⁶⁶ Continuing the trend toward Picturesque landscape design, Lydig Hoyt developed The Point in 1850, reflecting the Picturesque landscape design mode with an associated Hudson River Bracketed style house.⁶⁷ A year later, in 1851, popular writer and poet, N.P. Willis, developed his retreat, Idlewild near Newburgh, as fine an example of Picturesque landscape gardening as can be identified in the valley.⁶⁸ In the last two examples, the architect of the house was Calvert Vaux, nearly twenty years before he aided Frederic Church at Olana. Finally, mention should be made of the development in the 1850s at Llewellyn Park in Orange, New Jersey, where both the landscape and architecture, much of it by A. J. Davis, was a notable and well-known

⁶³ A.J. Davis, “A Description of the Paulding Villa,” not dated (c. 1840) [Avery Library, Columbia University], as quoted in RMT, “Lyndhurst’s Picturesque Design,” The Westchester Historian (The Westchester County Historical Society), Vol. 70, No. 2 (Spring, 1994), p. 29.

⁶⁴ Jacquetta M. Haley, Pleasure Grounds, Tarrytown, NY: Sleepy Hollow Press, 1988. Also, letters from A.J. Downing to Robert Donaldson (12 letters from 12/1840 to 7/1847) [Collection of Richard Jenrette, New York].

⁶⁵ Andrew Jackson Downing, Cottage Residences or, A Series of Designs for Rural Cottages and Cottage Villas, and their Gardens and Grounds Adapted to North America, 1st ed. (1842), New York, NY: John Wiley and Son, 5th ed., 1873, pp. 161-63.

⁶⁶ RMT, “The ‘Prophetic Eye of Taste’: Samuel F. B. Morse at Locust Grove,” The Hudson Valley Regional Review, Vol. 12, No. 1 (March, 1995), pp. 1-48.

⁶⁷ RMT, “The Point: Design and Meaning,” unpublished monograph, 1984.

⁶⁸ RMT, “‘Illustrated and Set to Music’: The Picturesque Crescendo at Idlewild,” Journal of the New England Garden History Society (Massachusetts Horticultural Society, Boston, MA), Vol. 4 (Spring 1996), pp. 1-12.

example of Picturesque landscape gardening.⁶⁹ During the 1840s, poet Edgar Allan Poe described a fictional landscape garden on the Hudson, saying in part that:

Its marvellous effect lay altogether in its artistic arrangement as a picture. I could have fancied, while I looked at it, that some eminent landscape painter had built it with his brush . . . , an artist, and one with a most scrupulous eye for form, had superintended all these arrangements. . . . Everywhere was variety in uniformity. It was a piece of “composition,” in which the most fastidiously critical taste could scarcely have suggested an emendation.⁷⁰

These Picturesque residential landscapes and their poetic admirers preceded Frederic Church’s development of Olana, so that Church can in many ways be said to culminate the long history of Picturesque landscape design as Downing described it. In turn, Church’s landscape design is an expansive master work of the Picturesque mode.⁷¹ Church’s first experience with landscape design followed only after 1860 and his acquisition of the farm that he would remake as Olana, but his awareness of landscape and art had begun when he was a boy. As has been shown, period commentators believed the link between landscape painting and landscape gardening was self evident. In this way, knowing Church as artist is to know him better as a landscape gardener. As an artistic undertaking within the long tradition of landscape gardening, Church had little need for more direct sources for his design work in the Olana landscape. From his own experiences and talents, he was supremely suited for this role. There were (as will be shown) a host of technical issues related to landscape gardening that could be learned by trial and error, and from the advice of others, in person or from Church’s readings.⁷²

⁶⁹ Susan Henderson, “Llewellyn Park, Suburban Idyll,” *Journal of Garden History*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (July-September, 1987), pp. 221-243.

⁷⁰ Edgar Allan Poe, “Landor’s Cottage” (1849), *The Unabridged Poe*, Philadelphia, PA: The Running Press, 1983, pp. 1097-1100.

⁷¹ Coming in the 2nd half of the 19th century, Olana’s creation was a late manifestation of the Picturesque in residential landscape design, i.e., the tradition of English landscape gardening. Park design, beginning with Central Park in New York City (1858), carried Picturesque design themes into the public sector. Church’s contribution was in the private, residential application of landscape gardening. Olana is among the largest of the extant Hudson Valley landscape gardens. For all these reasons -- its date of development, its comprehensive and expansive scale, and its masterful execution by a renowned artist -- Church’s work at Olana can be said to culminate the Picturesque design mode.

⁷² The inventory of Church’s library indicates the sorts of books he may have consulted when developing the landscape, but little can be said definitively on this topic. Only one book related to landscape gardening is known to have been in the library: Charles H. J. Smith, *Landscape Gardening: Or Parks and Pleasure Grounds*, New York, NY: C. M. Saxton, 1853. As had others before him, Smith attested to the affinity of landscape art and the landscape garden, saying: “It is well known that the expounders of this branch of art [i.e., landscape gardening] have adopted some of the principles and employed very much the language of painting. The artist in our department is supposed to create a landscape in living nature, just as the painter creates it on canvas . . . [the landscape gardener] is bound to create views, . . . his business is what is technically called composition.” pp. 288-289.

Church was born into a prosperous, religious (Congregationalist), long-established New England family. While dubious of his son's artistic ambitions, Church's father, Joseph Church, and mother, Eliza, consistently supported his interest, funding a series of tutors who guided the precocious boy's training as a landscape artist (fig. 6).⁷³ This apprenticeship culminated in 1844 when Church became the student of Thomas Cole (1801-1848). By this date, Cole was revered as a landscape painter and was later recognized as the founding member of a group of like-styled, 19th-century American landscape artists who came to be called the Hudson River School. Today, the Hudson River School is understood as representing America's earliest native expression -- clearly they expressed, on canvas, the Romanticism of their period.⁷⁴ Thomas Cole lived in the little Hudson River Valley village of Catskill, in close proximity to the mystical Catskill Mountains from which he drew much of his inspiration. The study of landscape aesthetics would have been explicit in Church's experiences at Catskill as Cole had given the topic much thought, even preparing an "Essay on American Scenery" in 1841.⁷⁵ In applying for this apprenticeship, Frederic Church assured Cole he would benefit from, "the romantic scenery about Catskill," and that "it would give me the greatest pleasure to accompany you in your rambles about the place, observing nature in all her various appearances."⁷⁶

On his stay with Cole, the gifted young painter and his master roamed the nearby hills in search of subject matter for their art, and Church experienced the picturesque

Other books in Church's collection tended to concern agriculture or were horticulturally based, for example: Familiar Lectures on Botany, by Almira Lincoln, Field & Hedgerow, by Richard Jefferies, Agriculture in New York (Vol 5), by E. Emmons, A Complete Manual for Cultivation of the Cranberry, by B. A. Eastwood, The Field Book of Manures, by D. J. Browne, and The Fern Garden, by Shirley Hibbard. Later, Church is known to have subscribed to Garden and Forest magazine. In 1888, he purchased a book entitled, Trees and Tree Planting - receipt: John Ireland, Bookseller to Frederic Edwin Church (hereafter cited as FEC), 10/22/1888 [David Huntington Archive, at Olana State Historic Site (hereafter cited as DHA)].

The above fragmentary evidence of Church's readings on landscape design and farm topics is all that is available. He is presumed to have been exposed to other written materials, and to have had direct contact with information and ideas that are not recorded. In these circumstances, the partial list included above cannot be evaluated as representing important or singular influences.

⁷³ Charles Dudley Warner, "An Unfinished Biography of the Artist," as published in Franklin Kelly, et al., Frederic Edwin Church, Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1989, pp. 180-181.

⁷⁴ Hudson River School was described in the late-19th century by critic Clarence Cook as including the "foremost representatives of 19th century American landscape painting," (1883). The term itself was first used in 1879. For a comprehensive discussion of the subject, see: American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School, New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987, especially, Kevin J. Avery, "A Historiography of the Hudson River School," pp. 3-20, and John K. Howat, "A Climate for Landscape Painters," pp. 49-70.

⁷⁵ Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," The Northern Light (May, 1841), as discussed in William H. Truettner and Alan Wallach, eds., Thomas Cole: Landscape Into Art, Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art, 1994, p. 166. This essay included some interesting comments on landscape gardening.

⁷⁶ Letter: FEC to Thomas Cole, 5/20/1844 [New York State Library].

aesthetic at its American source. While occurring nearly 50 years after the picturesque aesthetic emerged, the American rendition was fresh and fully conscious of the magnificence and grandeur of the New World. As with other artists, Church no doubt “shared an aesthetic vocabulary including architecture and landscape gardening,”⁷⁷ while his experiences were directly reflected in landscape painting.

It was on one of his outings at Catskill that Frederic Church first visited the site of his future home, sketching the scenery and experiencing the majestic yet intimately-scaled Hudson River panorama that remains today.⁷⁸ After a two year tutelage in Catskill, Church moved to New York City where his works immediately sold well. He quickly established his reputation and at the age of 23 was elected an academician of the National Academy of Design. In the 1840s and 50s, Church produced paintings that closely paralleled Hudson River School precepts. These works included Scene on the Catskill Creek, New York (Ashington Co. Museum of Fine Art, Maryland, 1847); West Rock, New Haven (The New Britain Museum of American Art, 1849); and Mount Katahdin (Yale University Art Gallery, 1853). Church took many trips into the wilderness in these years, and these experiences proved formative for his art.⁷⁹ In the late 1850s, Church completed what are today considered American masterpieces, the large exhibit pictures Niagara (The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1857) and Heart of the Andes (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1859). These works assured Church’s fame before the start of the Civil War.⁸⁰

Early in 1860, as Church was about to acquire a farm on the Hudson River, he completed Twilight in the Wilderness (The Cleveland Museum of Art, fig. 7), which when exhibited was recognized as “one of his very best.”⁸¹ The picture is a sublime view from a raised overlook toward an immense North American landscape of forest, mountains and sky, captured at dusk without human presence, in a state of utter solitude and stillness. Twilight in the Wilderness is a fitting testimonial to Church’s commitment to the values of unembellished, evocative nature. The painting is evaluated by one scholar as a “summary image of the American landscape,”⁸² while another proclaimed it represented, “America as

⁷⁷ Albert Fein, “Landscape Architecture and the Hudson River Valley: The Junction of Nature and Technology,” in, Sandra Philips, et al., Charmed Places, New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988, pp. 19-41.

⁷⁸ See: The Hudson Valley from Red Hill, 1845 [OL.1980.1333].

⁷⁹ American Paradise, p. 251.

⁸⁰ The work of Frederic Church has been extensively documented and analyzed in recent years. See American Paradise, and Kelly, et al., Frederic Edwin Church, 1989.

⁸¹ “Fine Arts,” The Albion, 6/6/1860, as quoted in Kelly, et al., pp. 58-59, note #130.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.59.

the Second Beginning.”⁸³ Church’s rendition of nature is primeval, except for the artist’s composition -- organizing nature into a specific, if unnamed, place.

While perhaps less indicative of his art, Church also composed pastoral and domestic scenes where rural America -- sometimes in pioneer circumstances -- integrated easily into otherwise near-wilderness conditions. The houses shown on these paintings, which included New England Landscape (Amon Carter Museum, 1849); New England Scenery (George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum, 1851); Home by the Lake (Collection of Jo Ann and Julian Ganz, Jr., 1852) and A Country Home (Seattle Art Museum, 1854), are not mansions but humble homes. Their modest door-yard, residential landscapes co-exist with an enveloping, boundless nature, and the scenes, as in Twilight in the Wilderness, are detailed and composed as distinct places. In several of the domestic landscapes, bounding waterfalls and rugged cliffs serve as dramatic landscape features in close proximity to the house.

Careful composition, so important to Picturesque landscape garden design, was common to all the Hudson River School artists, as were such universal principles of art as variety within unity, and the harmonious blending of otherwise separate parts. Frederic Church’s understandings of the aesthetics of landscape painting informed his landscape gardening. For example, Church was familiar with the long-established distinction between rugged and pastoral landscapes as codified by the art of Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa.⁸⁴ As noted earlier, the landscapes of Lorrain and Rosa had been associated with English landscape gardening since its inception, more than a hundred years earlier. In the Hudson River Valley, it was not only Church who continued the association of landscape painting with landscape design. A.J. Downing drew on the refined pastoral imagery of Lorrain and the irregularities and drama of Rosa as background for his distinction between the Beautiful and Picturesque modes of landscape design, noting:

the difference between the beautiful landscape [i.e., painting] of Claude and the picturesque scenes painted by Salvator. . . [T]he name of Claude Lorraine cannot fail to suggest examples of beauty in some of its purest and most simple forms . . . those graceful and flowing forms of trees, foreground and chaste beauty,. . . On the other hand, where shall we find all

⁸³ David C. Huntington (hereafter cited as DCH), The Landscapes of Frederic Edwin Church, New York, NY: George Braziller, 1966, p. 83.

⁸⁴ Church’s old master collection, housed at Olana, included three paintings Church believed were by Salvator Rosa, and one he believed was by Claude Lorrain (see accession files for OL.1981.55, OL.1981.58, OL.1981.65 and OL.1981.61). Unfortunately, none of these works have these attributions today. In addition, in Olana’s Sitting Room Church displayed an engraving which he believed was a portrait of Claude Lorrain (see accession file for OL.1983.924). The author thanks Karen Zukowski for pointing out Church’s link to Lorrain and Rosa.

the elements of the picturesque [painting] more graphically combined than in the vigorous landscapes of Salvator Rosa!⁸⁵

Tracing the roots and possible connections between Church's own art and his appreciation of Lorrain, Rosa and other of the "old masters" is beyond the scope of this report, but it must be presumed that these links extended to Church's reaction to the related practice of landscape gardening, and his documented use of a Picturesque design approach at Olana.

Frederic Church's fidelity to nature is one important link to be explored. As was the case with other members of the Hudson River School, Church emphasized the literal depiction of nature that finds direct parallels in Picturesque landscape gardening at Olana. Thomas Cole stated this painterly principle succinctly, saying: "imitation is the means through which the essential truths of nature are conveyed."⁸⁶ One modern critic described Church's approach to painting as an "almost agonized desire to make the spirit of nature gleam through each detail."⁸⁷ The idea was that nature had only to be truthfully seen in all its minutia to be provocative.⁸⁸ In turn, fidelity to observed fact leads to greater truth. These painterly principles echoed the tenets of William Gilpin, Uvedale Price and the other picturesque improvers of late 18th-century England, who aspired to glorify nature by closely imitating a truly-natural appearance in landscape gardening. It is a theme explicit in Church's approach to the Olana landscape. In 1891, a visitor noted the Churches' care for every wild flower at Olana:

Not a daisy is allowed to be pulled, not a cats tail - and as for goldenrod!
The other day we drove miles to get some yellow daisies & sweet fern, when
there were prairies of it all round about here - but that would have dispoiled
the place - taken a little from its beauty.⁸⁹

This sense that nature and place, be it on canvas or in the landscape garden, must be approached literally and reverentially was a hallmark of the artists who are associated with the Hudson River School, and it is endemic to Picturesque landscape gardening as defined by Downing. In showing nature for itself, scholar Barbara Novak concludes that the Hudson River School artists, "raised nature above art and ego, and subsumed self in spirit"

⁸⁵ Downing, Landscape Gardening, 5th ed. (1854), p 65 and 67.

⁸⁶ Thomas Cole, "Lecture on Art," in, Marshall Tymn, ed., The Collected Essays and Prose Sketches of Thomas Cole, St. Paul, MN: John Colet Press, 1980, p. 108.

⁸⁷ Barbara Novak, Nature and Culture, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980, p. 71.

⁸⁸ American Paradise, p. 241. The author says Church believed, "that art should be the mirror of nature, that the picture should replicate what the artist sees."

⁸⁹ Letter: Grace King [to Nan], 7/17/1891 [Collection of John Coxe, courtesy of special collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries].

in a way that was uniquely American because “nowhere in Europe was a similar emphasis placed on the ‘weight’ of reality.”⁹⁰ While Americans were influenced by Europe, “other attitudes stemmed more directly from American soil and from the pragmatic encounter with the look of their native landscape.”⁹¹ A parallel argument can be made for Church’s Picturesque style landscape gardening. Understanding the link between the landscape painter and the landscape gardener, Olana’s landscape design is a simple extension of Church’s art -- into a third dimension. Olana was a rural home set in harmony with others amid benevolent nature. This was a setting for Picturesque landscape gardening as championed by the picturesque improvers and recognized by Downing.

Artistic inclinations provide the most crucial clues for understanding Church’s landscape design at Olana, where a literal rendition created a design nearly indistinguishable from the vernacular countryside (albeit idealized countryside), with only a hint of artifice. In the same way that Frederic Church and the Hudson River School infused landscape painting with fidelity to nature, so too did Church’s landscape gardening at Olana adhere to the supremacy of irregular forms and ever-changing design effects described by A. J. Downing and his predecessors as the crux of the Picturesque design mode. The Olana landscape took this idea to a grand and exquisite form where landscape garden, pastoral countryside and wild nature melded imperceptively through the refined art of America’s premier landscape painter.

Throughout his career, the link between Church’s painterly pursuits and landscape gardening was recognized. In 1871, for example, Frederick Law Olmsted, America’s greatest professional landscape designer in this period, commented on Church’s role as a newly appointed commissioner of New York City’s Central Park (which Olmsted and Calvert Vaux had designed about twelve years earlier). Olmsted called Church:

a quiet, retired man, a model of rank and file citizenship, . . . called on at last to serve the public in an office where his special training [as an artist] will be of value. . . We are anxious as matter of propriety that the art department should be recognized -- that the public utility of devotion to art and the study of Nature in a public service of this kind should be recognized and Church seemed on the whole the most appropriate and respectable man to express this.⁹²

⁹⁰ Novak, p. 273.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 233. Despite his interests in exotic places, Church championed American themes, at one point encouraging his friend, sculptor Erastus Dow Palmer (hereafter cited as EDP) to, “give up your foreign subjects and come squarely home to thoughts that we can understand - home subjects” -letter: FEC to EDP, 1/5/1875 [McKinney Library, Albany Institute of History and Art (hereafter cited as AIHA)]. Erastus Dow Palmer (1817-1904) was one of Church’s closest friends. A sculptor, Palmer lived in Albany. His son, Walter, was for a time a student of Church’s.

⁹² Letter: Frederick Law Olmsted to Charles Loring Brace, 11/24/1871 [Frederick Law Olmsted Collection, Library of Congress]. The author thanks John K. Howat for pointing out this quotation.

Church's role at Central Park was a limited one, but at Olana the artist made a lasting contribution to the long tradition of landscape gardening on private residential grounds. Despite the long-recognized affinity of landscape painting and landscape gardening, there are few documented properties where the art of landscape gardening is attributed to an artist -- let alone a landscape artist. While there are several other members of the Hudson River School who may have involved themselves in the practice of landscape gardening in this period, their work as gardeners has not been studied in detail. Examples might include Jasper F. Cropsey (1823-1900) who in 1866 developed a property he called Aladdin, located in Orange County, NY. In 1880, Cropsey moved to a more modest cottage property in Hastings-on-Hudson he called Ever Rest. Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902) developed his home, Malkasten, in Irvington-on-Hudson in about 1865. Even earlier, George Harvey (1801-1878), may have undertaken modest landscape gardening at his residence, Woodbank, in Hastings-on-Hudson in the 1830s.⁹³ In truth, few antebellum American artists had the financial means or expansive property to involve themselves in this pursuit. Cropsey's Aladdin was 45 acres and he was forced to give it up because of financial difficulties. Ever Rest was more modest, totally perhaps 5 acres. Bierstadt apparently had the financial resources but Malkasten was a modest property of about 5 acres. Likewise, Harvey's home, Woodbank, was a property of limited acreage. These examples seem to contrast with Church's financial and land resources in developing Olana. One reporter, in 1884, said of Church's work on the property: "[It] could not have been accomplished by the Bohemian type of artist."⁹⁴

While it is apparent that the creation of Olana's landscape was primarily a work of landscape gardening, some have suggested that conservation values in some measure influenced Church design. This idea also emerges from Church's art, which is seen as "an early signpost central to the landscape preservation movement [in America]"⁹⁵ Some have gone further, suggesting that, "in laying out his landscape garden, Church was motivated not only by artistic concerns but by practical, humanitarian and ecological concerns as well."⁹⁶ While this point is not directly supported by evidence, from an age that was only

Frederic Law Olmsted (1822-1903) was born in Hartford, Connecticut and was an acquaintance and 4th cousin of Frederic Church.

⁹³ For these and other examples, see: William B. Rhoads, "The Artist's House and Studio in the Nineteenth Century Hudson Valley and Catskills," in, Philips, et al., pp. 77-97.

⁹⁴ F. N. Zabriskie, "'Old Colony Papers,' An Artist's Castle and Our Ride Thereto," The Christian Intelligencer, 9/10/1884.

⁹⁵ American Paradise, p. 251.

⁹⁶ Bethany Astrachan, "The Olana Landscape Garden: Frederic Church's Contribution to Wilderness Preservation," unpublished thesis, Columbia University, 1/12/1995, pp. 2-3.

beginning to appreciate environmental threats, there was an implied environmental concern in this period and a design approach that masked art and artifice -- the Picturesque -- helped Olana to be “ a small paradise. . . the antithesis of the complex modern world.”⁹⁷

In summary, the context in which Olana was created deserves, and will no doubt inspire, additional research. The findings of this historic landscape report suggest that Church’s achievement at Olana was especially noteworthy, and that the property’s survival is of unusual historic significance. Olana’s design quality results from the excellence that might be expected when the eye of a gifted, experienced painter is turned to the practice of landscape gardening in the Picturesque mode. Church’s artistic role is here combined with a highly significant design style -- as the Picturesque resonates with international implications.⁹⁸ Olana, its house and landscape, represent a landmark of Picturesque landscape gardening expressed in America’s Hudson Valley setting where the picturesque aesthetic was to reach a crescendo.

Speaking of his landscape design efforts at Olana, Church once declared: “I can make more and better landscapes in this way than by tampering with canvas and paint in the studio.”⁹⁹ This remark confirms assertions consistently made throughout the history of landscape gardening -- by Alexander Pope, William Shenstone, Uvedale Price and the picturesque improvers, Samuel F.B. Morse, Edgar Allan Poe and A. J. Downing -- that the landscape painter was the most appropriate landscape garden designer. Church’s role in creating Olana assures the property’s significance as one of the finest and most significant surviving designed landscapes in the United States.

⁹⁷ Astrachan, p. 54.

⁹⁸ J.D. Hunt, Gardens and the Picturesque, Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1992. The picturesque aesthetic was related closely to what Hunt called “the authority of the individual sensibility,” i.e. individuality that was a hallmark of social evolution by the end of the eighteenth century, played out in political revolutions in America and France and forming the basis for Romanticism. Also, Mavis Batey, “The Picturesque: An Overview;” and David Watkin, The English Vision: The Picturesque in Architecture, Landscape and Garden Design, London, 1982.

⁹⁹ Letter: FEC to EDP, 10/18/1884 [AIHA].

SECTION II - PROPERTY HISTORY DURING CHURCH'S LIFETIME

1. Before 1860

In 1794, a local man named Wynsant Brezie (1739-1802) purchased a farm lot in the town of Greenport, Columbia County, New York from landlord John J. Van Rensselaer.¹⁰⁰ A mortgage records the metes and bounds exactly, seemingly an original description,¹⁰¹ suggesting that the sale was the property's initial subdivision from a larger holding. The boundary calculations on the 124-1/4 acre parcel were tied to a "new cellar," apparently a reference to a farmhouse constructed in that period.¹⁰² The existence of the farmhouse was confirmed on a survey called the Penfield Map, dated 1799 (fig. 9).¹⁰³ The map depicts the "Wynsant Brezie" farm, with the date: "26 Sepr. 1794," and "123 Acres," inscribed on the plat. The boundaries are drawn exactly as described in the 1794 mortgage. If the old map is compared to the present situation, a common field line can be detected extending from the neighboring farm on the east, indicating that the Brezie parcel was probably cleared as part of an earlier adjacent farm development.

The 1799 Penfield Map includes a tiny sketch of a farmhouse, representing the structure erected near the center of the Brezie parcel.¹⁰⁴ The map also shows six trees aligned in two rows, indicating an orchard near the farmhouse, with the remaining acreage open land. The farm was nestled on the southeast and east sides of a long high ridge and hilltop.¹⁰⁵ The ridge separated the east-facing farm from the Hudson River to the west.

¹⁰⁰ Research on the Brezie family, and early history of the farm parcel purchased by Frederic Church in 1860, by Kristin L. Gibbons (hereafter cited as KLG), Bureau of Historic Sites, NYSOPRHP. See: "Some Thoughts on Olana's Early Land History," 4/1996 [OSHS]. Wynsant Brezie was a member of an old local family (also Breezy, Bresie, Brusy, Bresy, Brisea, Brisee, and other spellings). John J. Van Rensselaer, who never lived at the property, was the last landlord of what had been a large patent granted to his ancestor, Kiliaen Van Rensselaer in 1685.

¹⁰¹ Columbia County Mortgage (hereafter cited as CCM), Book A, page 297 (dated 9/26/1794). All Columbia County Court records are housed at the County Court House, Hudson, NY.

¹⁰² The name, "farmhouse," "Brezie farmhouse," "1794 farmhouse," "18th-century farmhouse" or "old farmhouse" will be used to identify this building for the purposes of this report.

¹⁰³ Entitled: "A Map of the Several Farms and Unappropriated Lands in the Town of Claverack and Corporation of Hudson Belonging to Daniel Penfield Esq.," surveyed by William Cockburn, Fred Hauson and William Cockburn, Jr., dated: "1799," scale: "10 chains to 1 inch;" Columbia County Historical Society (hereafter cited as CCHS). This map was prepared to show the Van Rensselaer lands and their leased subdivision prior to 1799. The dates inscribed on many of the parcels refer to lease or sale dates.

¹⁰⁴ In common with convention elsewhere on the 1799 map, a perspective sketch of a small house is shown on the Brezie parcel. The depiction also includes a drawn rectangle close to the house drawing, a symbol not commonly seen elsewhere on the map.

¹⁰⁵ A deed recorded in 1831 [Columbia County Deeds, (hereafter cited as CCD) Book Q page 574], uses the name "Senghebergh" to describe this hill. A year later another deed [CCD, Book P, page 738], spelled the name "Sienghenbergh." The 1799 Penfield Map includes a label whose spelling is difficult to decipher (possibly "Began" or "Selgre" ?, followed by "Bergh." The name is presumed to be Dutch but its meaning is unclear. There

From this early date, the property was consistently referred to in deeds and mortgages as the “Brezie Farm.”

In the first half of the 19th century, this was a typical hardscrabble family farm. Over a fifty-year history, the property changed ownership at regular intervals.¹⁰⁶ In 1802, Wynsant Brezie’s will described his “lands and property,” and referred to a family of seven children.¹⁰⁷ In 1817, Brezie’s oldest son, Andrew, after inheriting his father’s holdings sold the farm to John Lape. In 1822, Lape obtained access to the Oak Hill-Hudson Road (today’s Route 9G)¹⁰⁸ after purchasing a “strip of land” on the west side of the farm (fig. 11).¹⁰⁹ This suggests that prior to that date the otherwise land-locked farm must have had access from adjacent farms.¹¹⁰ The lot purchased in 1822 seems to have included a modest house sited directly on the public highway.¹¹¹

After a nine-year residence, in 1826, John Lape received a mortgage for the farm from Jacob Sharp. This mortgage indicated that a “John Mambert” was also residing on the property, perhaps in the house on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road.¹¹² Sharp apparently had problems and in 1833 lost the land for non-payment of taxes. Henry Miller, a neighbor to the southeast, purchased the property at a tax auction.¹¹³ The Miller family retained ownership as an extension of their farm for twenty years, probably with unrecorded tenants or family members living in the Brezie’s 1794 farmhouse and the house on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road.¹¹⁴ The property is shown on a survey map of the Miller property dated

is no evidence that Frederic Church or his contemporaries used the name in the later 19th century. The name “Church’s Hill” appears on 20th century maps. Given the uncertainty, the term “dominant hill” or “the hill” or “hilltop” will be used for the purposes of this report.

¹⁰⁶ CCD, Book 13, page 283, dated: 3/31/1869. A preliminary narrative with this deed summarizes the history of the “Wynsant Breezy farm.”

¹⁰⁷ Columbia County Wills (hereafter cited as CCW), Book B, page 172.

¹⁰⁸ While other names were used, the “Oak Hill-Hudson Road,” or “public highway” will be used for the purposes of this report.

¹⁰⁹ CCD, Book 13, page 283, dated 3/31/1860, recorded 3/31/1860. This transaction was not recorded at the time, but the “strip of land” is mentioned in this later document and others. It could be that Lape purchased a 1-3/4 acre lot mentioned in a summary of land transactions (John E. H. Plass to John I. Lape, as mentioned in CCD, Book 13, page 284). This was likely the northern portion of a 16+ acre parcel purchased by John E. H. Plass from John Tompkins in 1821 (CCD, Book S, page 482). Church’s later deed confirms the access onto the public highway, reading in part: “[bordered] on the west by lands of said John E. H. Plass, the public highway and lands of the estate of James Hallenbeck, deceased.”

¹¹⁰ Earlier access was possible through the larger farms east and north of the Brezie parcel.

¹¹¹ A map (fig. 11) showing the Brezie farm shortly after Church’s purchase clearly indicates that Church owned lands that provided a wide frontage (exceeding 250 feet) onto the Oak Hill-Hudson Road. At the southwest corner and directly on this road frontage, a drawn square symbolizes a structure. A house is also shown in this location on a map entitled: “Map of Columbia County, N.Y.,” by J.W. Otley, C.E., 1851 [CCHS]. Today, extant foundation remnants can be found on the site. The name, “house on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road” will be used to identify this building for the purposes of this report.

¹¹² CCM, Book I, page 415.

¹¹³ CCD, Book T, page 356.

¹¹⁴ CCW, Book G, page 144.

1834 (fig. 10). This map records the boundaries of the Brezie farm but does not show the “strip of land” connection to the Oak Hill-Hudson Road. The map shows the Brezie farmhouse (labeled “old dwelling house”) and a “barn,” shown located north of the farmhouse.¹¹⁵ It was during the Miller ownership, in 1844-45, that Frederic Church lived at nearby Catskill as a student of Thomas Cole. In 1853, the Millers sold the Brezie parcel, a total of 126 acres, to Levi Simmons.¹¹⁶ In that year, Simmons and his wife were in their thirties, with several young children and a hired hand living with them. Their agrarian life is documented by census data for the year 1855 providing an excellent portrait of a subsistence family farm of that period, and of the particular farm that would be the basis of Frederic Church’s Olana.¹¹⁷

The census listed 110 acres of the farm as “improved,” the rest being woodlots and wetland. 55% of the improved land, about 60 acres, was ploughed, roughly half the property -- about 40 acres for oats, 5 acres for rye, wheat and buckwheat, 18 acres for corn, extensive plantings of potatoes (1 acre), a lot of peas (2-1/2 acres) and a large kitchen garden (1-1/2 acres) growing a variety of other vegetables.¹¹⁸ The approximately 40 acres of “improved” land not ploughed was presumably portions of the orchards, as well as meadows (10 acres), pastures (18 acres), and the barnyards, roads and the immediate grounds of the farmhouse. The pastures and meadows helped support livestock, including 5 dairy cows and about 6 beef cattle. There were a pair of oxen, used for the ploughing, and three horses. Simmons kept about 20 pigs and maintained a chicken coop. There was an apple orchard that produced 150 bushels of fruit and 7 barrels of cider in 1855. In 1855, the Simmons farm was valued at \$7,500.

2. Early Years on the Farm, 1860-1867

Five years after the 1855 census, Frederic Church paid \$10,000 for the Simmons farm (fig. 76).¹¹⁹ Later, Church recalled a “three year”¹²⁰ search for a suitable property,

¹¹⁵ KLG speculates (conversation with RMT) that the barn may be represented on the 1799 Penfield Map, with the small open rectangle being the unfinished depiction of the farmhouse, or perhaps the “new cellar,” mentioned as the starting point of the boundary description.

¹¹⁶ CCD, Book XX, page 150.

¹¹⁷ Census data was researched and compiled by KLG, see: “Census Data Related to Olana State Historic Site,” 4/1996, pp. 3-4 [OSHS].

¹¹⁸ That the total, 68 acres, is more than the 60 acres ploughed is not explained in the census data. All figures are approximate.

¹¹⁹ CCD, Book 13, page 283, dated: 3/31/1860, recorded: 3/31/1860. Land acquisitions are illustrated in figures 76-79, showing the property’s development over time.

but as others have concluded, it “seems inevitable”¹²¹ that this site, so close to his Catskill haunts, was selected. Confirming his intentions, Frederic Church married Isabel Mortimer Carnes (1838-1899) on June 14, 1860, two months after the Simmons property was purchased.

After the sale, Levi Simmons stayed on to operate the farm, living in the old farmhouse as stipulated in the purchase agreement.¹²² In addition to the 1794 farmhouse (which sheltered a full cellar, as well as a loft above the first floor), the farm included some unspecified support structures, probably a barn, stable and sheds, certainly an outhouse. Also included in the sale was the house on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road.¹²³

From his earliest interest in acquiring land opposite the village of Catskill, Church was aided by Theodore Cole (1838-1928), oldest son of the artist Thomas Cole, who lived and farmed at the Cole homestead, Cedar Grove, across the river from Church’s newly purchased farm. Church’s close relationship with the Cole family is exemplified by the decade-long farm collaboration between Church and his caretaker/manager, Theodore Cole.¹²⁴ Later, Cole summarized to Church: “I always feel almost as if I was doing something for my Brother when I am doing anything for you.”¹²⁵

¹²⁰ “The American Rhine, Interesting Facts About the Country Around Hudson,” New York World, 7/21/1889. “This spot was selected by Mr. Church after a three year’s diligent search along the Hudson and a careful study of the river shores, which he explored in hopes of finding a spot that would combine the greatest number of nature’s beauties.” The “three year” search was also specified by Frank J. Bonnelle, “In Summer Time on Olana,” Boston Sunday Herald, 9/7/1890, p. 17. Some of the same language used in the New York World piece is close to the comments in “The Homes of America V,” The Art Journal (NY. ed.), Vol 2 (August, 1876), pp. 245-248, which reads in part: “The site for the residence was selected by Mr. Church after a careful study of the river-shores.” There was no mention here of a three year investigation.

¹²¹ James A. Ryan (hereafter cited as JAR), “Frederic Church’s Olana: Architecture and Landscape as Art,” in Kelly, et al., p. 128. Because of his stay in Catskill, as a student of Thomas Cole in the period 1844-45 some authors have described a more direct and conscious association between Church and the property he would constitute as Olana. For example, Zabriskie, claimed the property was “his favorite spot” during his stay in the area, and that Church “realized an early dream by rearing [his house] on the summit of this commanding eminence.” As the author had the opportunity to gauge these matters in Church’s lifetime the commentary is persuasive, although uncorroborated by Church’s own words.

¹²² Letter: John Gaul, Jr. to FEC, 2/6/1861 [DHA]. Gaul was Church’s local attorney.

¹²³ This house is shown on a map entitled: “Map of Columbia Co. N.Y.,” by S.N. Beers, D.J. Lake & F.W. Beers, 1858 [CCHS]. A black square identifies the structure and is labeled “L. Simmons.” See also, map from: S.N. Beers, Atlas of Columbia County, N.Y., 1873 (fig. 20). The 1873 map include a black square in this same location, with the letters “FEC” inscribed beside it. In 1868, while the Churches were overseas, Theodore Cole (hereafter cited as TC) reported, “we have one of our laborers living in the gate house” - letter: TC to FEC, 5/24/1868 [DHA]. This might refer to the house located at the original access on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road, but it could also be a reference to another structure located at the northern end of the strip of land acquired in 1868 (see below). This house is shown on a 1858 map entitled “Map of Columbia Co, New York” [CCHS], without the name or initials of an owner. It is shown on the 1873 map (fig. 20) labelled “F.E.C.”

¹²⁴ Church had known Theodore Cole when he was a child and Church was a student of his father Thomas Cole. Church did not use the term ‘caretaker,’ or similar titles in his references to Theodore Cole that survive. In 1862, Theodore Cole modestly said he had “not superintended any particular work but just things in general” - letter: TC to FEC, 12/30/1862 [DHA]. This seems accurate, with Cole superior to all

Acting on Church's direction, Cole visited the Simmons farm in February 1860 and recorded in his diary that he intended "to see about getting out muck," referring for the first time to excavation in the area of the future Lake,¹²⁶ a month before Church had even closed on his purchase of the property.¹²⁷ Muck excavation seems to have proceeded at a modest but steady pace for the next twenty years. It is unclear if some excavation, perhaps to drain the wet area so that crops could be cultivated, or to insure a supply of water for the farm, had been carried out earlier.¹²⁸

On April 2, 1860, when Church was upriver for the closing, the two men again visited the farm and Cole reported "quite a tramp over it,"¹²⁹ no doubt discussing plans for its management and development. There were repeated trips to "Mr. Church's Place," throughout the 1860 season.¹³⁰ Immediately, Church set about building what he first called "a farm house," which he hoped to have completed by the autumn.¹³¹ The structure was designed with the assistance of architect Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895), or perhaps his office staff.¹³² This was later called Cosy Cottage and it was the Churches' home at the farm for more than ten years.¹³³ One visitor suggested that Cosy Cottage had been located to catch "the first and last glances of the sun,"¹³⁴ but its siting, centering the farmstead, fundamentally tied to the newlyweds interest in, and early commitment to, farm life.

other staff at the property, enjoying Church's full confidence and loyalty. 'Caretaker' or 'manager' would not be an inappropriate title for such a role.

¹²⁵ Letter: TC to FEC, 11/29/1868 [DHA].

¹²⁶ Church usually called this the Lake, occasionally the pond. The name, "Lake," will be used for the purposes of this report.

¹²⁷ TC, diary entry, 2/28/1860 [Vedder Memorial Library, Greene County Historical Society (hereafter cited as VML)]. These records have been researched for references to Church by Raymond Beecher, in about 1981. Also, see: Raymond Beecher, "Went Over the River to Churches Place," unpublished article (4 pages) no date, c. 1981 [VML].

¹²⁸ There is evidence for this in the area's depiction on a painting by Arthur Parton, dated 1864 (fig. 14).

¹²⁹ TC, diary entry, 4/2/1860 [VML]. Cole's diary entries are cryptic and no more specific information is given.

¹³⁰ TC, diary entry, 9/21/1860 [VML].

¹³¹ Letter: FEC to A.C. Goodman, 8/20/1860 [DHA]. While the term, "farmhouse" was initially used, "cottage" was also used in some correspondences, e.g., letter: FEC to Joseph Church (hereafter cited as JC), 4/15/1864 [DHA]. See: JAR and Richard P. Gromek, "Historic Structure Report for Cosy Cottage," 1997 [OSHS].

¹³² Receipt: Richard Morris Hunt to FEC, 4/1/1861 [DHA]. Hunt was a New York City acquaintance of Frederic Church. He was later the champion of French classicism and the Ecole des Beaux Arts that so influenced architecture in 'Gilded Age' America - themes contradictory to Church's Romantic period aesthetic.

¹³³ The first use of the name "Cosy Cottage" was in a letter: Isabel Carnes Church (hereafter cited as ICC) to Mrs. Erastus Dow Palmer, not dated, c. 6/7/1870 [AIHA]. In 1872, the name was used by one of Church's relatives - Henry Q. Mack, diary entry, 10/30/1872 and 11/4/1872 [VML]. There does not seem to have been habitual use of the name later in Church's lifetime, but it has gained wide use since. The name Cosy Cottage will be used for the purposes of this report.

¹³⁴ Mack, diary entry, 11/4/1872 [VML].

Throughout 1860, while the new cottage was being built, the Churches stayed with the Coles at Cedar Grove. A payment of \$100, for “Board to date,”¹³⁵ is recorded in September 1860, after Theodore Cole noted that “Mr. & Mrs. Church” arrived on July 7th, apparently on their first visit to the property as a married couple.¹³⁶ With the cottage under construction, and Levi Simmons continuing to farm the property, Church sketched in the Catskills, commuting regularly across the river to visit. Cole noted planting 250 strawberry plants in late August, probably in the cottage garden that was developed just east of Cosy Cottage.¹³⁷ In September, the Churches visited Maine. They returned to the property in October, when Cole, with Church’s help, planted cranberry bushes, probably in the wetland area that would be slowly excavated for the future Lake.¹³⁸ Also in October, a well was dug.¹³⁹

After its completion, Cosy Cottage was the couple’s primary residence, but the Churches also spent long periods in New York City and elsewhere in the early 1860s. There was some scurrying to find accommodations for workmen in the spring of 1861,¹⁴⁰ but the Churches seem to have moved into Cosy Cottage in May or June,¹⁴¹ and added a kitchen wing early that same summer.¹⁴² At that same time, Theodore Cole reported that “quite a number of trees were set out.”¹⁴³ It appears that the ongoing emphasis during the year was on getting the agricultural operations arranged in a way suited to the family’s intentions.¹⁴⁴ In the first few years, buildings were being constructed, while perhaps older structures were being improved, but the specifics of this work are documented from fragmentary evidence.¹⁴⁵ Theodore Cole was actively involved managing the property,

¹³⁵ TC, account book entry, 9/6/1860 [VML].

¹³⁶ TC, diary entry, 7/7/1860 [VML].

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 8/4/1860. The strawberries were likely planted in the fenced, intensely cultivated garden plot located east of Cosy Cottage. This area is called the “cottage garden” for the purposes of this report.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 8/24/1860 and 10/9/1860.

¹³⁹ FEC account book, payment of \$45 for the well digger, 10/1860 [DHA]. There were several wells on the property, including one near the old farmhouse and one in the barn complex.

¹⁴⁰ Letter: Levi Simmons to FEC, 3/11/1861 [DHA].

¹⁴¹ Letter: FEC to JC, 4/15/1861; Bill: H.P. Skinner (Hudson, NY) to FEC (for carpet), 3/20/1861; and Bill: W. & J. Sloane (NY) to FEC (for carpet), 5/11/1861 [DHA]. The carpet was to be installed in the cottage.

¹⁴² Bill: David Drummond to FEC, 7/1/1861 [DHA].

¹⁴³ TC, diary entry, 4/25/1861 [VML], and letter: TC to FEC, 12/30/1862 [DHA].

¹⁴⁴ From the evidence, Levi Simmons and George Simmons, and the subsequent early farmers, seem to have handled the rigorous aspects of the farm work, including the ploughing, cultivation of crops, harvesting and barn operations, with some autonomy. The Churches seemed to be directly involved in the kitchen garden and orchards, as well as the flower garden developed close to Cosy Cottage, but even in these areas there was backup help available. No separate gardener is mentioned in these early years.

¹⁴⁵ For background on this construction, see: Peter Stevenson, “Restoration Report for ‘Cozy (sic) Cottage,’” unpublished thesis for the Cooperstown Graduate Program, State University of New York at Oneonta, 1972, especially Chaps. II, IV and V [OSHS].

making routine visits to to the farm and keeping accounts of expenses and farm income. Cole interviewed and hired the farmer and other workers taken on by the day or week for specific projects. Cole reported on farm activities in end-of-the-year letters, and more frequently when the Churches were away.

In April 1861, a clergyman named Dr. George W. Bethune (1805-1862) purchased a 30-acre parcel adjacent to Church's holdings at the Brezie farm.¹⁴⁶ A map from this period (fig. 11) shows the situation. Dr. Bethune was a friend of Frederic Church's who apparently admired the area. He was the first of several relatives and acquaintances whom Church encouraged to set up country residences in the neighborhood, often despite their misgivings.¹⁴⁷ Given their proximity and close relationship, it seems likely that Church's plans for his farm were contingent to some extent on Bethune's development. Even before Bethune's purchase was finalized, Church's farmer wrote: "I wanted to know if you intend to have the south end of the piece of land purchased by your friend [i.e., Dr. Bethune] then I can get the stuff for fences,"¹⁴⁸ indicating that an adjustment in Church's own boundaries may have been part of the purchase.¹⁴⁹ A later newspaper clipping says that "Dr. Bethune had selected a site for a residence almost unsurpassed in points of view. Church . . . had agreed to place his residence in close proximity."¹⁵⁰ Church's collaboration with his neighbor was abruptly ended when Bethune died in 1862. Thereafter, whatever joint plans the two had discussed were rendered obsolete and Church soon acquired Bethune's property (see below).

In unknown circumstances and timing, Levi Simmons left the property, probably after the 1861 season. A "George Simmons," perhaps a relative of Levi Simmons, stayed on to farm the land.¹⁵¹ In 1862, excavation for Church's planned Lake continued. Cole wrote that one of the farm hands "is getting out muck."¹⁵² The muck from the Lake was spread on the farmland, especially on the "hill" west and northwest from Cosy Cottage.

¹⁴⁶ CCD, Book 15, page 606.

¹⁴⁷ Letter: George W. Bethune to FEC, 8/15/1860 [DHA], and Charles Dudley Warner, "An Unfinished Autobiography of the Artist" (1900), Kelly, et al., p. 197.

¹⁴⁸ Letter: Levi Simmons to FEC, 3/11/1861 [DHA].

¹⁴⁹ There is no deed to confirm this, but the c. 1861 map (fig. 11) shows Church's western boundary at an angle, rather than a line perpendicular to the public highway, as is thought to have been the case when Church first purchased the farm in 1860.

¹⁵⁰ "Hudson Revisited," Unidentified newspaper clipping, not dated (c. summer 1867) [VML].

¹⁵¹ Letter: TC to FEC, 12/30/1862 [DHA]. The first notice of George Simmons is for the 1862 season. It is possible that Levi Simmons left before the end of the the 1861 season. There is evidence of acrimony when the Churches had a run-in with Levi Simmons' wife, as Isabel Church sarcastically called her: "the sweet wife of our former farmer," who had removed "some plants & an apricot tree," Mrs. Simmons claimed to have planted, but which had been included in the farm's sale. The plants were later returned. Letter: ICC to JC, 5/2/1862 [DHA].

¹⁵² Letter: TC to FEC, 12/30/1862 [DHA].

This area is referred to here as the park.¹⁵³ An entry in the ledger on November 27, 1862, noted an expense for “paper for wrapping trees,”¹⁵⁴ This sort of paper was used to protect the bark of either fruit or ornamental trees. From the time of his first purchase, Church planted trees in large numbers, so that by the spring of 1864 he tallied his efforts at “several thousand” trees already planted.¹⁵⁵ In addition to fruit trees, the new plantings included native deciduous trees, such as sugar maples and white birch, and native evergreens, pines, spruce and especially hemlocks.¹⁵⁶ Lake excavation and tree planting complemented each other, with Church asserting that, “my muck seems wonderfully adapted to trees and I give them liberal doses of it.”¹⁵⁷

In this early period, some of the Churches’ friends seemed a bit startled at the couple’s head-long pursuit of rural life. One of Church’s friends wrote to ask how he “and Mrs. Church were getting on with your farm work,”¹⁵⁸ while another wondered: “can it be possible that you have abandoned the exquisite field of ideality in which you have reaped so many laurels, for the sure matter-of-fact one of the husbandman?”¹⁵⁹

In December 1862, Theodore Cole wrote to summarize the year’s work and included the comment that: “It all seems to be money out for you. I am sorry to say. It is astonishing how much it costs to carry a place like yours. I hope though in time you will receive a return for your outlay.”¹⁶⁰ In fact, there was only meager farm income to cover the capital outlay, or even the day-to-day operations in these first few years. Of course, Church’s improvements should not be measured on the criteria of a hardscrabble farm.

¹⁵³ Letters: FEC to JC, 5/13/1864; and TC to FEC, 5/24/1868 [DHA]. The name “park” is used for the purposes of this report to identify the hillside above Cosy Cottage, bounded on the west and north by the original farm property line, on the east by the orchards and Cosy Cottage, and on the south by the Lake. This area was extensively planted with trees in the early years of Church’s residency. Grazing was restricted there and several roads were laid out, so that the area came to resemble parkland. Eventually this became the critical foreground between the House and the Lake, and the foreground for many of the important views from the Studio and the House. Theodore Cole, in 1868, referred to this as “the hill.” From the documentation, Church did not use a specific name to describe this area, but in 1868 Church confirmed that “I don’t pasture the front of the farm.” - Letter: FEC to William H. Osborn (hereafter cited as WHO), 11/30/1868 [DHA]. This “front” included the park, as well as the site of the Lake and its woodland environs (see: Section III - Design Description). William H. Osborn (1820-1894) was one of Frederic Church’s closest friends, as well as a patron and advisor. This and other letters to Osborn are lost. Transcripts are in the archive at Olana.

¹⁵⁴ Letter: TC to FEC, 12/30/1862 [DHA].

¹⁵⁵ FEC to JC, 5/13/1864 [DHA].

¹⁵⁶ Letter: FEC to JC, 5/13/1864 [DHA]. Later, in 1890, it was reported that Church, in the early years of his residency at Olana, planted “thousands and thousands of trees.” - Bonnelle.

¹⁵⁷ Letter: FEC to JC, 5/13/1864 [DHA].

¹⁵⁸ Letter: John McClure to FEC, 6/3/1862 [DHA].

¹⁵⁹ Letter: Ramon Paez to FEC, 9/15/1862 [DHA].

¹⁶⁰ Letter: TC to FEC, 12/30/1862 [DHA].

Rather, for Church, the work was an investment in his future country home, a place of refuge for the artist and his family.

Isabel Church was pregnant during the summer of 1862. The Churches' first child, Herbert Edwin, was born in October. The family lived at Cosy Cottage and enjoyed a modest farm life. Access into the site was from the "strip of land" beside the house on the Oak Hill - Hudson Road. Presumably built by this date was a piece of roadway -- a cottage driveway -- that bypassed the farm buildings on its way to the Churches' new home. Maple trees were planted along the new alignment (fig. 40).¹⁶¹ The prominent south front of the cottage, seen on entering, was shown in several illustrations (figs. 17 and 38). It seems probable that flowers were planted close to the cottage but if there was a separate flower garden it is not documented. The Churches spent a delightful summer in 1862. Their friends, Erastus Dow Palmer and his wife made a long visit, staying in the old farmhouse which does not seem to have been used by a farmer in that year.¹⁶²

Again in 1863, the Churches seem to have been in residence at the farm at least from May through August. In April, Church wrote to his father, Joseph Church, announcing that he had paid off the farm mortgage, saying that: "the farm is clear and I have no doubt of my ability to make all the improvements it needs easily."¹⁶³ There was continued instability regarding the farmer with Theodore Cole noting that he "gave George Simmons warning to leave," effective on April 1 1863.¹⁶⁴ Then, a "Mr. H. Rogers" was hired to fulfill the same or similar farm work previously rendered by the Simmons.¹⁶⁵ A large quantity of fence posts and rails were purchased in February 1863, indicating that considerable fence construction occurred that year.¹⁶⁶

In this period, with the Civil War raging (the battle of Gettysburg was fought in July 1863), Church had ongoing difficulty finding a reliable and skilled farmer, and competent help generally.¹⁶⁷ "Mr. H. Rogers" lasted only through the 1863 season, leaving a hired hand by the name of "Thomas" living on the farm during the winter of

¹⁶¹ The name, "cottage driveway," is used for the purposes of this report. It was one of Church's early road construction projects, but documentation definitively dating its construction has not been identified.

¹⁶² Letter: Louis Noble to FEC, 9/15/1862 [DHA]. The farmer, thought to have been George Simmons, may have lived off the property, or perhaps in the house on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road.

¹⁶³ Letter: FEC to JC, 4/6/1863 [DHA]. Joseph Church helped to finance his son's development and there was a steady flow of correspondences discussing aspects of the arrangements. See, for example: Letters: FEC to JC, 1/30/1863, 2/2/1863, 2/10/1863, 3/24/1863; and JC to FEC, 2/26/1861, 3/14/1861 and 4/6/1863 [DHA].

¹⁶⁴ TC, diary entry, 2/7/1863 [VML]. Cole was critical of George Simmons, saying: "I feel that more could have been accomplished had you had a more efficient man than George" - letter: TC to FEC, 12/30/1862 [DHA].

¹⁶⁵ TC, diary entry, 2/13/1863; and 2/21/1863 [VML].

¹⁶⁶ TC, diary entry, 2/13/1863; and account book notation, 3/27/1863 [VML].

¹⁶⁷ Letter: FEC to Ramon Paez, 9/2/1862 [Archives of American Art].

1863-1864.¹⁶⁸ An Englishman was hired for the 1864 season, with Church saying: "I have engaged a farmer, an Englishman, to take charge of the farm [,] he is highly recommended and I hope will suit. I have not been very fortunate heretofore in my selections."¹⁶⁹ The Englishman, a "Mr. Ledford," obviously did not "suit," and in 1865 Church wrote to Theodore Cole hoping, "that the [new] farmer will prove the right man."¹⁷⁰ Despite personnel difficulties, offset to a large extent by Theodore Cole's loyal and honest involvement, Church continued to make significant improvements to the farm throughout this period. In this way, the farm was made over to Church's specifications in these early years. As part of the remodelling, portions of the farm were reserved for non-agricultural use. Notable in this regard was the future Lake, and Church's parkland that together extended over the entire western half of the Brezie farm property. A painting of this area (fig. 14), dated 1864, shows the scene before ornamental improvements had begun, with ploughed land (and a corn crop) on the hillside and what appears to be drainage excavation in the wetland -- future Lake -- at the bottom of the hill.

The history of the Lake and park, only beginning to take shape in 1864, is traced to Church's comprehensive landscape design for his property. As early as 1861, Frederic Church's father had been concerned that it would not be prudent to pay off the mortgage since the farm would be easier to sell with the mortgage unpaid, an expression perhaps of fatherly skepticism.¹⁷¹ In turn, by paying the mortgage Frederic Church underscored his commitment to the development of a sizable farm estate. In fact, it seems that from 1861, and certainly no later than the spring of 1864, Church had formulated a comprehensive landscape design scheme for the future.¹⁷² Church's farm was restricted to the original 126 acres, but in 1864 he began a complex series of land purchases that eventually doubled his holdings and provided the landscape needed for the future Olana.

Early in 1864, Church added the first of these land purchases, the approximately 30 acres owned earlier by Dr. Bethune and purchased from his widow.¹⁷³ This was the steeply-sloping land lying to the west of the original farm parcel (fig. 77). The hillside

¹⁶⁸ Letter: TC to FEC, 2/17/1864 [DHA].

¹⁶⁹ Letter: FEC to JC, 2/28/1864 [DHA].

¹⁷⁰ Letter: FEC to TC, 7/28/1865 [DHA].

¹⁷¹ Letter: JC to FEC, 2/26/1861 [DHA]. Joseph Church cautioned his son: "men sometimes change their minds in such matters."

¹⁷² As discussed above, by 1864 Church had worked with Dr. Bethune, from the summer of 1860 through the summer of 1861, before Bethune's death in 1862. During this period, Church and Bethune are thought to have planned a mutually satisfactory development of their adjoining properties, although specifics of these plans are not documented. In 1864, Church mentioned that the hilltop might be purchased for the price quoted three years earlier -- i.e., 1861, indicating that he had investigated the matter at that time.

¹⁷³ CCD, Book 20, page 409, dated: 3/18/1864, recorded: 4/7/1864. See letters: J.B. Stewart to FEC, 1/26/[1864?], John Gaul, Jr. to FEC, 2/9/1864; and Charles Tracy to FEC, 3/15/1864 [DHA].

fronted on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road, which traced the base of the dominant hill and led south to Greendale Landing and railroad station (opposite the village of Catskill), and north to the City of Hudson. Due to its steep topography, the so-called Bethune lot was not suited to farm use, nor did it include the future house site at the top of the hill. Still, as part of his long-range strategy, Church knew that this landscape would be critical to his scheme, as it was the foreground for the prominent views southwest and west from the planned house site at the top of the hill and from his “South Road” then under active construction.¹⁷⁴ In 1864, the farm had only the earlier access at the “strip of land” fronting the Oak Hill-Hudson Road, and this Church found undesirable (see below). The Bethune lot provided the opportunity to develop a new and dramatic approach drive into the property. In February 1864, Theodore Cole commented on the purchase of the Bethune lot and concluded: “I suppose road making will be the order of the summer.”¹⁷⁵ This may have been a reference to the “Bethune Road,”¹⁷⁶ probably built in the period 1864-65, although specifics of this construction are not documented. The Bethune Road is shown on the 1873 Map of the area (fig. 20). It was located to exit onto the Oak Hill-Hudson Road at a point opposite a private road, to which the Churches were given access, that led to the Catskill Station (a.k.a. Greendale Landing).¹⁷⁷ A later visitor seems to have come up the Bethune Road from the ferry landing as he described it as a “mountain road,”¹⁷⁸ which it certainly resembled.

On May 13, 1864, only two months after this land purchase, Frederic Church wrote to his father and described his ideas, although there is the distinct sense that he was more sure of his plans than he let on. He commented on the value of the Bethune lot in “securing fine openings for the views,” and said of the newly purchased property: “I cannot sell it at present because I should then have no opportunity to make a suitable entrance and roadway into my place,”¹⁷⁹ apparently referring to his plan to construct the Bethune Road. Possibly to placate his father Church suggested that the new lot could even

¹⁷⁴ Letter: FEC to JC, 5/13/1864 [DHA]. The name, “South Road,” appears as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana (see below).

¹⁷⁵ Letter: TC to FEC, 2/17/1864 [DHA]. The Bethune Road was probably built in the period 1864-1865, but documentation confirming this has not been located. It is possible that the Bethune Road was begun during Dr. Bethune’s brief ownership, or even earlier.

¹⁷⁶ The name, “Bethune Road,” appears as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana. The name was also used regularly in correspondences.

¹⁷⁷ Greendale Landing was a rail stop and ferry terminus to the village of Catskill. In the early decades of their residency, this was the common access for the Churches coming by train from New York City or crossing the river from the Cole house in Catskill. As such, the Bethune Road was a direct approach to the property.

¹⁷⁸ Mack, diary entry, 10/30/1872 [VML].

¹⁷⁹ Letter: FEC to JC, 5/13/1864 [DHA]. This important letter was written in response to Joseph Church’s apparent concern as to the desirability of purchasing the Bethune lot.

be sold in the future, but only if other land sales could be arranged for a “suitable entrance.” He explained:

I understand that the piece of woods at the North of my farm on the top on the hill can be had at the price asked 3 years ago \$2,000, with that and a strip say 200 feet wide on the eastern side of the lot north of it I should have a remarkably easy and superb roadway. This strip could not cost over \$500, probably less. Of course I would not buy one without the certainty of the other.¹⁸⁰

The driveway Church envisaged here was the future “North Road”¹⁸¹ constructed late in 1869 (see below). For his father, Church evaluated the advantages of the desired roadway, Olana’s future main entrance, in terms of convenience: “The advantage of the proposed Roadway is that it saves a mile in getting to Hudson.”¹⁸² Importantly, these comments show that Church clearly planned and designed Olana’s future development, and understood the critical land acquisitions that the scheme required, many years before the ideas could be implemented on the ground. In this way, Frederic Church was practicing landscape gardening on an expansive scale. Interestingly, Church sketched the entire hillside of the future Olana in 1863, clearly showing the extent of his future development (fig. 13).

Before Church could obtain the hilltop and lands for his “North Entrance”¹⁸³ he continued to concentrate his efforts on the farm, making further improvements. There were extensive new plantings of orchard trees, combined with the planting of hundreds of parkland trees, set out on the hillside west of the Cosy Cottage and above the wetlands that Church envisaged as the Lake. In addition to planting trees, it seems probable that selected areas were allowed to grow up into woodlands, later to be managed. In July, a severe drought killed some of the newly planted trees, with Church resigning himself to replacing them.¹⁸⁴

The Churches immersed themselves in these activities. Typically Church, in the company of Theodore Cole, would visit early in the spring and then move there with his family about May 1st. In mid-April 1864, for example, he wrote his father that since the beginning of winter he had made three trips to the farm and “found everything in splendid progress. My new farmer [the Englishman, Mr. Ledford] promises to be a treasure so

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ The name, “North Road,” appears as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

¹⁸² Letter: FEC to JC, 5/13/1864 [DHA].

¹⁸³ The name, “North Entrance,” appears as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

¹⁸⁴ Letter: FEC to WHO, 7/7/1864 [DHA].

have got three admirable men on the place.”¹⁸⁵ These men included “Thomas,” a worker discussed earlier, and “John,” mentioned in Theodore Cole’s correspondences and account records that survive.¹⁸⁶

In his April 1863 letter, written four years after the farm’s purchase, Church described the scene:

The grass was fresh and green around the house [Cosy Cottage]. The strawberries had commenced throwing out new leaves. Vines and plants were well started [,] peas have been up some little time - about five hundred trees have been planted and about as many more will be this spring. Mr. Cole purchased for me some time ago a splendid pair of black horses at \$700. . . I found the air so invigorating there that I think it will be advantageous to take an early start [at moving up river].¹⁸⁷

A month later, Church wrote his father again with this description:

The farm looks better than ever before . . . The peach [,] pear and plum trees are a sight . . . The apple trees are just beginning to come out . . . We have a coop of 15 chickens by the house and he [Church’s son Herbert] feeds them out of his hand - He is fascinated by the horses - I have a pair of pigeons.¹⁸⁸

The Churches’ second child, Emma Frances, was born in October 1864, but the following spring tragedy struck when both of the Churches’ young children, Herbert and Emma, died of diphtheria in New York City. Devastated, the Churches spent the summer of 1865 in Jamaica. Cozy Cottage was rented.¹⁸⁹ While away, Church wrote to Theodore Cole: “I cannot think of the farm . . . without great longing.”¹⁹⁰ Returning in the autumn of 1865, the Churches spent the winter at the farm.¹⁹¹ Church’s most notable project in 1865 may have been the construction of a Studio.¹⁹² As early as spring 1864, Church wrote of his intention to “make a road to the place where I intend to build this summer,”¹⁹³ possibly a reference to the Studio, but the completion date of this structure is uncertain.

¹⁸⁵ Letter: FEC to JC, 4/15/1864 [DHA].

¹⁸⁶ Letter: TC to FEC, 12/30/1862 [DHA]; TC, account notations, 1864 [VML].

¹⁸⁷ Letter: FEC to JC, 4/15/1864 [DHA]. Theodore Cole’s diary entries and account notations confirm these activities. The black horses were purchased on February 17, 1864, and 300 maple trees, costing \$24, were purchased on April 7, 1864.

¹⁸⁸ Letter: FEC to JC, 5/13/1864 [DHA].

¹⁸⁹ TC, diary entry, 6/7/1865 [VML].

¹⁹⁰ Letter: FEC to TC, 7/28/1865 [DHA].

¹⁹¹ Letter: FEC to WHO, 1/1/1866 [DHA]. The letter describes the winter scene and is headed “Siberia.”

¹⁹² This name, “Studio,” appears as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

¹⁹³ Letter: FEC to JC, 5/13/1864 [DHA].

The first reference to the Studio's use was at the end of 1865.¹⁹⁴ In the early years, Church apparently had only make-shift studio space at the farm. Now, a new "plain but ample studio,"¹⁹⁵ a large (24 foot square), wooden structure was available in which Church, "had not the slightest difficulty in keeping warm and comfortable."¹⁹⁶ The studio was located in the hillside park, about 150 feet above Cosy Cottage. From this position, the Hudson River Valley and the Catskills were visible to the west in a scene often sketched by Church (fig. 15). In turn, the view was made into an engraving and circulated to a wider audience (fig. 16). Only one photograph shows Church's Studio, and that is a blurry distant image (fig. 21). Archaeological investigations have located the site of this building, which was removed by Church in about 1888 (see below).¹⁹⁷ The south and east facades of the Studio, visible in the photograph, had blank walls but there was a large windows on the north and possibly a smaller window on the west where there was also a porch (6 foot x 8 foot).¹⁹⁸ It was from this orientation, either from the porch or close-by, that Church sketched the view southwest (fig. 15).

The construction and Church's first recorded use of the Studio, late in 1865, marked renewed property activity after the interlude of mourning. But while the Churches were away, Theodore Cole, "George the Farmer" (as Cole called him), and help from hired hands such as "Thomas" and "Pat" kept the farm operating in an efficient way.¹⁹⁹ "George the Farmer" was a reference to George Rushway, a German immigrant who had been hired as farmer for the 1865 season after Mr. Ledford left.²⁰⁰ Writing from Jamaica, Church alluded to arrangements he had made for excavation in the area of the ever-expanding Lake, saying:

I received your letter in which you refer to Mr. Barhyte's desire to secure more of that muck. I have no objection provided he hauls out an equal number of loads for me according to the restrictions previously arranged. It is important though that he should not carry off for his own use the top layer of muck - the black part - and leave me the lower. He should make a equal division.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁴ Letter: FEC to WHO, 1/1/1866 [DHA]. "I am not much interrupted in my studio."

¹⁹⁵ Letter: FEC to Ramon Paez, 9/11/1866 [Archives of American Art].

¹⁹⁶ Letter: FEC to WHO, 1/1/1866 [DHA].

¹⁹⁷ Charles L. Fisher (hereafter cited as CLF), "Archaeological Discovery of Frederic Church's First Studio at Olana State Historic Site, Columbia Co., N.Y.," BHS, 2/1994 [OSHS].

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ TC, account notations, 1865 [VML].

²⁰⁰ In the 1865 census, Rushway is listed as a 40 year old, born in Germany and married to a German wife. This census also mentions a 3rd dwelling house, presumably the house at the Oak Hill-Hudson Road. The Charles Bowman family is recorded as living there.

²⁰¹ Letter: FEC to TC, 7/28/1865 [DHA].

Mr. Barhyte, who was a neighbor,²⁰² apparently kept at muck excavation for several years, with mention of his ongoing activities at late as February 1869. By that time, Theodore Cole commented that others were at work: “This winter George [possibly George Rushway, the farmer] has got out heaps of it [i.e., muck] on the land.”²⁰³

After spending the winter of 1865-66 at the farm, the Churches were only in residence during a two-week period in the summer of 1866 (June 30-July 19), spending much of the season away from the property.²⁰⁴ They returned late in the year and again spent the winter, with Church working diligently in his Studio.²⁰⁵ A third child, Frederic Joseph, the first since the death of Herbert and Emma, was born on September 30, 1866.

The 1867 season was a busy one with the Churches in residence at the farm from February until September, preparing for a long trip to Europe and the Near East planned for the autumn. In the spring, Church wrote that, “my hands are busy in farm work [,] hauling muck, &c. It is delightful to see the farm alive again.”²⁰⁶ There was a new baby at the cottage and spirits were restored. All summer, major renovations were made at the farm. While the documentation is vague, it seems that Church built a “new barn”²⁰⁷ and remodeled “my old barn.”²⁰⁸ An ice house was re-roofed. At this point, Church claimed to have constructed “ten distinct buildings, and they haven’t cost much either.”²⁰⁹ Included in this total was Cosy Cottage, the cottage outbuilding, the Studio, the new barn, an extensively remodeled second barn and/or a stable, a structure described as “a little building to accommodate a coachman,”²¹⁰ the re-roofed ice house, and several other smaller sheds and specialty buildings.²¹¹

As noted earlier, the Churches took to country life with great enthusiasm. The interest was obvious when Church wrote that “Mrs. C. has a digging fit. She flits about

²⁰² The name, “Baarhyte,” appears on the 1873 map on a parcel south of the Churches (fig. 20).

²⁰³ Letter: TC to FEC, 2/23/1869 [DHA].

²⁰⁴ Debora Rindge, “Chronology,” from Kelly, et al., p. 166.

²⁰⁵ Letter: FEC to Martin J. Heade, 12/28/1866 [Archives of American Art].

²⁰⁶ Letter: FEC to WHO, 3/26/1867 [DHA].

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 6/13/1867 [DHA].

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 10/25/1867 [DHA]. It is difficult to precisely identify these buildings. Perhaps Church was using the term “barn” to describe a building referred to in this report as the “farm Stable” (?), in which case, the “new barn” could be the structure south of Cosy Cottage, the older portion of the Barn in place in 1900. In this case, the “old barn” might be the farm Stable, or the reverse. It is unclear. Only one barn is clearly identified as present in the last decade of Church’s lifetime.

²⁰⁹ Letter: FEC to WHO, 10/25/1867 [DHA].

²¹⁰ *Ibid.* The name, “Coachman’s House,” will be used for the purposes of this report. This building is thought to have been subsequently converted into a garden shed (see below).

²¹¹ Such outbuildings as the granary, an Earth Cellar (root cellar) and a Corn Crib, while not mentioned specifically until later, may have been in place by 1867.

with a trowel in one hand and juvenile plants in the other all day,”²¹² and describing how, “I superintend my own hot bed this season and if I plant my seed right side up I may expect to see them sprout in a day or two.”²¹³ Despite the self-deprecating tone Church was serious about the farm operations. The farm was repeatedly characterized as “magnificent,” and served as an inspiration and subject of Church’s art (fig. 8).

By the end of these early years, the reliable farmer George Rushway,²¹⁴ the coachman, Michael McKenna, and his brother William McKenna, and the oversight provided by Theodore Cole, gave Church the loyal, skilled farm staff he sought for the property’s ongoing development and efficient operation. North of the Lake, the southeast slope of the hill was quickly developing as parkland. It was here that Church had planted hundreds of trees in the first years of his residency, so that by 1868, Theodore Cole reported to Church: “You are occupying the uplands with trees.”²¹⁵

All these plans and improvements were summarized in a revealing newspaper account published in the summer of 1867. It said in part:

[After Dr. Bethune’s death in 1862] Mr. C. bought and annexed his grounds. He is now employed in laying out roads, planting trees, and, in various ways, rendering the place attractive. His cottage [Cosy Cottage], of the Gothic style, is nestled in a vale, where the stretch of interior landscape reminds one of Devonshire, England. But this residence is only temporary. He proposes to build on the hill overlooking the river and the grand outline of the Catskills. On this elevation now stands his studio, to which he introduced us.²¹⁶

Church’s plans for a house at the top of the dominant hill moved closer to reality later that year, and in 1868, when two lots were acquired that Church claimed would “make my farm perfect.”²¹⁷ First, the house site, 18 acres of mature woodland purchased in October 1867 (fig. 78).²¹⁸ Here Church would begin construction on his house, 2-1/2 years later in the spring of 1870.

Early in 1868, another purchase was made. This was the long narrow “strip,” alluded to in Church’s comments to his father in May 1864 (fig. 78).²¹⁹ This corridor

²¹² Letter: FEC to WHO, 6/13/1867 [DHA].

²¹³ Ibid., 3/26/1867 [DHA].

²¹⁴ Letter: TC to FEC, 11/7/1868 [DHA].

²¹⁵ Letter: TC to FEC, 9/12/1868 [DHA].

²¹⁶ “Hudson Revisited,” (c. summer 1867) [VML].

²¹⁷ Letter: FEC to EDP, 10/22/1867 [AIHA].

²¹⁸ CCD, Book 30, page 429, dated: 10/28/1867, recorded: 10/29/1867.

²¹⁹ CCD, Book 32, page 125, dated: 3/31/1868, recorded: 4/2/1868. The parcel purchased by Church seems to be that depicted as a pentagonal-shaped woodlot on the 1799 Penfield Map (fig. 9). According to deed information, this parcel was purchased by Cornelius Benham (Sally Benham’s father) in 1816. The Benham farm and barns were located to the east (today’s Columbia-Greene Community College campus - see fig. 1). The land west of the Benham’s woodlot was an open field owned by the Hallenbeck family. Deeds show that a fence line was maintained between the Hallenbeck field and the woodlot. After Church

provided access to the north - toward the City of Hudson. Church proclaimed it “all splendid woods,”²²⁰ and planned a new entrance road there. The land, 6-1/2 acres, was subdivided from the western side of the Sally Benham farm that was being sold at this time. It was an intriguing purchase, with Church managing to buy only what he needed without disrupting the sale of his neighbor’s farm, although he had feared “that someone will buy it [i.e., the Benham farm] who will refuse to sell such fine woods.”²²¹ The transaction, which required a detailed survey, was finally completed in March 1868 after the Churches had sailed for Europe.²²² Road construction there began after the Churches returned in the late summer of 1869.

3. Foreign Travel and House Construction, 1868-1872

In November 1867, the Churches, accompanied by one-year old Frederic Joseph and Mrs. Church’s mother, Emma Carnes, sailed for Europe and did not return to their farm until the summer 1869, missing the 1868 summer completely.²²³ While away, in February 1869, another son, Theodore Winthrop, was born.

In November 1868, a year after their departure, Theodore Cole reported that “the farm I think will pay all expenses this year.”²²⁴ Three weeks later, Cole confirmed that there was “a balance in your favor on my book now.”²²⁵ The circumstances of this financial success are spelled out in the Cole accounting. The 1868 season was apparently a low-key but efficient one. In the spring, Cole wrote to Church’s father that “everything is going on very finely on your son’s place this spring[,] all crops &c. look very well.”²²⁶ With the Churches out of the country and special projects few, there was a business-like

purchased the Benham parcel the established fence line was maintained as a property line. The eastern side of the corridor became the eastern boundary of Olana. The deed described this alignment in detail and stipulated that a fence line be erected along it, dividing the woodlot. A fence was installed here in the spring of 1868 - letter: TC to FEC, 5/24/1868 [DHA]. Remnants of this line can be traced on the ground today.

²²⁰ Letter: FEC to WHO, 10/25/1867 [DHA].

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Letter: John Gaul, Jr. to JC, 3/25/1868 [DHA]. There is no mention in the deeds or letters related to this sale that would indicate that a house existed on the acquired parcel. Still, a house is represented on the 1873 map and it is labeled “F.E.C.” suggesting that there may have been a house located at this entrance.

²²³ The Churches visited Europe and the Middle East before returning to the United States in the summer of 1869.

²²⁴ Letter: TC to FEC, 11/7/1868. Theodore Cole approved of George Rushway: “George has driven along the work right smart . . . he has done well this year.”

²²⁵ Letter: TC to FEC, 11/29/1868 [DHA].

²²⁶ Letter: TC to JC, 5/19/1868 [DHA].

approach. Most importantly, the weather was favorable for what Theodore Cole described as “a fine crop of peaches.”²²⁷ Expenses in 1868 included about 33 visits to the farm by Theodore Cole, at \$5 per day, totalling about \$170; and \$684 in cash given to the farmer, George Rushway. Cole also listed about \$150 in miscellaneous expenses, such as seeds and bone meal, which he himself incurred. While the expenses are not itemized, George Rushway seems to have hired help and covered other expenses from his cash payments.²²⁸ These total expenses of about \$1,000 were offset by \$850 in fruit sales, notably peaches,²²⁹ and \$150 from the sale of hay. Of course, these totals did not include the capital outlay and operating costs that Church had incurred in farm improvements during the previous seven years, much less his family’s livelihood,²³⁰ but he took pride in his balanced books, boasting to a friend that “the farm pays,” and that this was “very soothing” to him.²³¹ Another friend replied, quoting Church:

I am glad to hear that ‘Your Farm’ financially ‘runs itself.’ I am every year more and more satisfied with your judgement and wisdom in locating and possessing, and improving, a beautiful & advantageously situated country home - particularly as I know how strongly your taste & that of Isabel runs that way.²³²

In July 1869, the Churches happily returned to the property after nearly two years absence. Writing to a friend, Church enthused that: “Here I am on my own farm - ! . . . About an hour this side of Albany is the Center of the world - I own it.”²³³ Shortly after his return, Church had a wing, “two rooms,”²³⁴ added to Cosy Cottage in order to provide additional space (fig. 17).²³⁵ Church also added two rooms to the old farmhouse (fig. 42),

²²⁷ Letter: TC to FEC, 7/14/1868 [DHA].

²²⁸ Cole’s 1868 account is not complete. There is no separate listing of salaries for hired help (such as Michael McKenna), or miscellaneous farm expenses left out of Cole’s breakdown. Then too, \$684 is too high a figure for a farmer’s salary alone. Church was prepared to pay \$350 for Mr. Ledford in 1864 but paid only \$300, to William Donnelly, as late as 1878. In light of this, George Rushway probably incurred expenses that were included in his cash receipts.

²²⁹ Letter: TC to FEC, 9/12/1868 [DHA]. Peaches were not widely grown in the locale because they are not considered fully hardy in the climate, but Church continued to grow them even after loosing whole crops to late spring frost. The 1868 season was a good one and his peaches sold very well. Theodore Cole wrote to Church: “You have the best peach orchard in this part of the country” - letter: TC to FEC, 5/24/1868 [DHA].

²³⁰ The \$1,000 farm income can be compared with Church’s other earnings in 1867 which totaled \$18,620 - letter: J. Gaul, Jr. to JC, 5/26/1868 [DHA].

²³¹ Letter: FEC to WHO, 11/30/1868 and 1/1/1869 [DHA].

²³² Letter: Edward A. Weeks to FEC, 2/18/1869 [DHA].

²³³ Letter, FEC to EDP, 7/7/1869 [AIHA]. The Churches returned to New York City on June 28 and after visiting Hartford, were at the farm a week later.

²³⁴ Letter: FEC to Edward A. Weeks, 10/13/1869 [DHA].

²³⁵ Letter: FEC to WHO, 8/31/1869 [DHA]. Complaints about limited space in Cosy Cottage were common in FEC correspondence from this period.

repaired other farm buildings,²³⁶ roofed an “Earth Cellar” (probably a root cellar) and built a new Ice House.²³⁷ “I have not been idle,” he wrote.²³⁸ In fact, Church’s involvement with the farm activities seems to have increased and he began to spend winters on the property. After the 1869 season, Theodore Cole’s activities at Olana were apparently reduced, though there remains evidence of his occasional involvement with the accounts until at least 1871.²³⁹

Despite some subsequent changes in the staff, the documentation indicates that by 1870 the farm settled into a consistent and smooth-running operation. There is little evidence of farm development in this period, indicating that the earlier work had largely completed the improvements Church intended to make in the agricultural operations. His focus now turned to the main House²⁴⁰ and a host of ornamental landscape improvements.

It is of interest here to return to the census data to compare Church’s farm operation with that of Levi Simmons, fifteen years earlier. In 1870, the farmer remained George Rushway. The “Hiram Dakin” family lived on the property, possibly at the house on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road.²⁴¹ The farm included about 175 acres and was valued at about \$25,000, more than 3 times the farm’s assessment in 1855.²⁴² The 126-acre original farm parcel remained intact, with the additional 50 acres all woodland, not used for farming. This allows a close comparison of the two farming periods. The census figures reflect the changes brought about by ornamental landscape improvements and modifications to the agricultural operations brought on by the Churches’ less frugal ownership. Ploughed land was radically reduced from more than 60 acres to perhaps 20 acres, while unploughed, open fields increased from 28 acres in 1855, to about 50 acres in 1870. The sharp decrease in ploughing went hand-in-hand with decreased grain production. Most notable was the

²³⁶ Letter: FEC to Edward A. Weeks, 10/13/1869 [DHA].

²³⁷ Letter: FEC to EDP, 9/22/1869 [AIHA]. The “Earth Cellar” may be a foundation discovered in 1981, dug into the east side of the Lake dam - memorandum, CLF to Nichol J. Forsht (Historic Site Supervisor, Taconic Park Region, hereafter cited as NJF), 3/16/1981 [BHS]. Still, without further study this is speculative. The name, Earth Cellar, will be used for the purposes of this report to tentatively identify this foundation. The “Ice House” is apparently the structure shown on photographs from late in Church’s lifetime (fig. 45).

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Beecher, “Went Over the River to Churches Place” [VML]. Beecher suggested an involvement of twenty years (1860-1880), but there are no account notations after March 1871.

²⁴⁰ Church often called this the “house,” although he and others also referred to it as the “mansion,” “castle” and “villa.” The name, “House,” appears as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana and will be used for the purposes of this report to describe the main dwelling built at the top of the hill.

²⁴¹ Federal census data for 1870 was compared with the New York State census for 1874 and 1875. All census data compiled by KLG, 1996.

²⁴² Ibid.

cultivation of oats, with 40 acres given to this in 1855 but only 4 in 1870.²⁴³ Oats, used for animal feed, as well as wheat and buckwheat, were purchased in quantity by Church to make up the shortfall in production. Restricted ploughing provided an enhancement to the farm's scenic quality. For Church, a ploughed field "spoils the beauty of the scene somewhat."²⁴⁴ Limited ploughing certainly reflected Church's concern for landscape gardening and also eliminated what was a rigorous, labor intensive task on any subsistence farm.

The census data shows other interesting changes in the 1855 to 1870 period, but it is notable that the farm remained a complete agrarian enterprise. For example, the total number of Church's farm animals remained quite similar to the totals in Simmons' time, with cows, horses, oxen and a few beef cattle still present in 1870. As in the earlier period, no sheep were recorded at Church's farm. At various times, Church also kept mules and donkeys, some imported after his travels to the Near East.²⁴⁵ One telling comparison were pigs, with Simmons' sizable herd of 20 reduced to 2 in 1870. There were no pigs at all in 1875.²⁴⁶ Chickens remained, and these were augmented at various times by pigeons, turkeys²⁴⁷ white geese and peacocks,²⁴⁸ all in residence during Church's lifetime.

Interestingly, there was actually less pastureland in 1870 than on the Simmons farm, with only 10 acres given to grazing in 1870 compared to about 20 in 1855. The limited pasturage caused Theodore Cole much concern and a plea to Church that "your place needs sadly more fall pasture."²⁴⁹ In 1870, with 9 yearlings and only about 10 acres available for grazing, Theodore Cole transported Church's young beef cattle elsewhere to graze for the season.²⁵⁰ Initially, Church's response was to suggest fewer grazing animals,²⁵¹ but eventually, in 1878, this problem was alleviated with the purchase of the 50-acre lot at the northern end of the property, the so-called north meadow (see below).

With his prized fruit cultivation, and with the varieties of vegetables in his kitchen garden, Church's farm was more diverse than the Simmons operation. Church expanded

²⁴³ Acreage figures are not included in the 1870 census. The acreage is calculated based on 1874 figures of 4 acres producing 150 bushels in 1870. 170 bushels were produced in 1870 suggesting that about 4 acres were used.

²⁴⁴ Letter: FEC to EDP, 5/3/1871 [AIHA].

²⁴⁵ Three white donkeys arrived from Syria in September, 1869 - see, letter: FEC to EDP, 9/22/1869 [AIHA].

²⁴⁶ New York State Agricultural Census, 1875, cited in KLG, 1996.

²⁴⁷ Letter: FEC to WHO, 1/1/1866 [DHA].

²⁴⁸ Letter: TC to FEC, 11/29/1868 [DHA].

²⁴⁹ Letter: TC to FEC, 11/7/1868 [DHA].

²⁵⁰ TC, diary entry, 5/20/1870 [VML].

²⁵¹ Letter: FEC to WHO, 11/30/1868 [DHA].

Simmons' apple orchard, and increased fruit production to include multiple varieties of cherries, pears, plums, peaches and grapes, and bush fruits - currants and raspberries, as well as strawberries. Church's kitchen garden (which included cutting flowers), reflected an interest in experimentation. While the documentation is fragmented, and crops would have varied year to year, it seems that vegetable and flower seeds were gathered from several sources, with new varieties tried regularly over the years.²⁵² In all this, Church confirmed his direct involvement, soberly claiming to one friend that he was "a plain farmer"²⁵³ and to another that he had "a large farm to keep an eye on."²⁵⁴ The financial success of the farm in 1868 was apparently not repeated in 1869 - despite having "sent from 20 to 50 baskets fruit to market daily."²⁵⁵ The bottom line was possibly adversely effected by the cost of improvements that Church made after his return from travelling overseas. Late in the year he wrote: "I am just closing up accounts at the farm and have relieved myself of considerable loose cash."²⁵⁶ With house construction looming, Church showed some concern about his finances.

Of the secondary projects that occupied Church's time after his return, construction of the North Road was notable on the landscape. The road was planned years earlier as the primary entrance toward the City of Hudson. Substantial road construction was done in the autumn of 1869. A two month long project is documented in Church's letters, initiated on September 22 when he wrote a friend: "I am making a new road . . ."²⁵⁷ To another friend, on October 13, he said: "I am constructing a long piece of road to the new House site . . ."²⁵⁸ On November 5, Church concluded that, "the new road is splendid."²⁵⁹ In the spring of 1870, Church began construction on his House, making the North Road immediately useful.²⁶⁰

²⁵² Only partial documentation survives to detail the seed and plant orders. Church consistently ordered vegetable and flower seeds from Peter Henderson & Co. of New Jersey. The earliest surviving receipt to survive is dated: 8/1878, while the last is from 11/1891. Church also ordered seeds from Jas M. Thorburn & Co. of New York City (receipt dated: 2/19/1888), and Price & Reed of Albany, New York (receipt dated 8/1/1888, 3/31/1890 and 5/18/1891). Flower and vegetable seeds were also purchased locally, as for example from Rice Brothers, Hudson, New York (receipt dated: 6/2/1884 and 5/1885) [DHA].

²⁵³ Letter: FEC to Mr. Austin, 9/16/1869 [DHA].

²⁵⁴ Letter: FEC to A.C. Goodman, 7/21/1871 [DHA].

²⁵⁵ Letter: FEC to Edward A Weeks, 10/13/1869 [DHA].

²⁵⁶ Letter: FEC to WHO, 11/5/1869 [DHA].

²⁵⁷ Letter: FEC to EDP, 9/22/1869 [AIHA].

²⁵⁸ Letter: FEC to Edward A. Weeks, 10/13/1869 [DHA].

²⁵⁹ Letter: FEC to WHO, 11/5/1869 [DHA].

²⁶⁰ A rudimentary, north-south roadway seems to have existed in the North Road corridor before Church purchased the Benham parcel. In a letter : FEC to WHO, 10/25/1867 [DHA], Church discussed purchase of "the roadway out through Sally Benham's farm," seemingly a reference to a road that pre-dated the purchase. The site itself suggests this was the case. In April 1991, NYSOPRHP archaeologists made a preliminary inspection of the site to help locate the historic demarcation line between the North Road woodlot and the north meadow. The findings - memorandum: CLF to JAR, 4/19/1991 [OSHS], indicated that a fence line,

In 1870, the Churches were at the farm for a good deal of the year.²⁶¹ In January, Church wrote that the “winter scenery here is marvelous. I had good skating on my pond,”²⁶² commenting on the use of the yet unfinished Lake. A son, Louis Palmer, later to inherit Olana, was born in April 1870. In May, Church wrote of the “apple trees. These old patriarches look like mountains of bridal bouquets,”²⁶³ a testimony to the old apple orchard that occupied the northern area of the Brezie farm parcel (fig. 43).

Throughout the winter and spring of 1870, plans for house construction continued. As early as 1867, Church’s friend, architect Richard Morris Hunt (or his office staff), was involved in developing a house design.²⁶⁴ For whatever reason, late in 1869, or in the winter of 1869-70, Church engaged Calvert Vaux (1824-1895), another friend and one of America’s foremost residential architects in this period.²⁶⁵ Vaux and Church can be considered kindred spirits in matters of Picturesque design. They collaborated in preparing drawings for the House design. Later it was said that “Mr. Church designed the house in all its details, consulting with Mr. Vaux, the eminent architect.”²⁶⁶ In fact, Vaux’s role was vital. He can be called the architect in the sense that Church was not. Vaux was a

closely paralleled by a rough road, existed west of the present North Road. This indicates that Church changed the alignment in this section after its purchase. Much of the 1869 construction on the North Road was on the uphill, switch-back section of the road which did not exist prior to Church’s development.

²⁶¹ Church painted snow scenes during the winter of 1870-71.

²⁶² Letter: FEC to WHO, 1/2/1870 [DHA].

²⁶³ Letter: FEC to WHO, 5/16/1870 [DHA].

²⁶⁴ Hunt’s involvement with plans for the House is documented by signed elevations and floor plans at Olana (OL.1980.1622, OL.1974.41; and OL.1984.309). Even before his departure, Church had received design ideas and had apparently studied, worked or been well briefed in a New York City architectural office. - Letter: Mrs. Henry deForest to Lockwood deForest, 8/15/1875, as quoted by JAR, “Frederic Church’s Olana: . . .,” note 34, in Kelly et al.; and, Gerald Carr, Frederic Edwin Church: Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of Art at Olana State Historic Site, Cambridge, England and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 303. Early designs for the House from Hunt’s office may date to this period. While away, Church wrote his friend William Osborn - letter: FEC to WHO, 7/29/1868 [DHA]: “I have got plenty of capital ideas and new ones about house building. As soon as I can afford it, I shall build a modest, substantial house for a permanent home. . . I have got a perfect situation and a perfect site on it.” For a discussion of these architectural issues, see: Kelly et al., pp. 135-146.

²⁶⁵ Calvert Vaux (1824-1895) had immigrated to America from England in 1850 and became a noted architect after his collaboration with A.J. Downing and F.L. Olmsted. For background information on Calvert Vaux, see: William Alex, Calvert Vaux, Architect and Planner, New York, NY: Ink, Inc., 1994. Vaux was well known to Church from his association with Central Park in New York City. In this period Church was serving as one of the park commissioners, an appointment that had been recommended by Vaux and Olmsted (see: Section I - Historical Background).

²⁶⁶ “Homes of America V,” The Art Journal, p. 248. Vaux’s role in the House design seems to have been as equal collaborator with Church. Vaux involvement lasted about two years. He understood the technical considerations and could have provided Church with feasible options that allowed the artist to make informed decisions. Only Vaux was an architect, but the two men might be considered joint designers. Church instigated the design approach, was actively involved and made the final decisions. He spent thousands of hours on details and supervised the work, and it is no wonder that he later claimed: “Yes, I can say, as the good woman did about her mock turtle soup, I made it out of my own head.” - quoted in Bonnelle.

professional. He understood the mechanics of construction, critical expertise that Church lacked. Vaux also brought long experience to design issues, such as a building's spatial design, its massing and three dimensional relationships -- all considerations unfamiliar to Church. Still, the House, as a primary component in the designed landscape, can be rightly attributed to Church. He was actively involved, determining the location as well as the design style. In the details, such as the entrance porch, ombra, piazza (veranda), roof projections and a host of decorative elements, Church's creative involvement is evident.

Vaux visited the site, apparently for the first time, in May 1870, and thereafter probably made several trips to the property, although the specifics are unknown.²⁶⁷ While possible, Vaux does not seem to have consulted in a substantive way about the landscape. He called his role that of "consulting / architect for Mr. Church / the artist / House, Hudson, Hudson River."²⁶⁸ What ideas Vaux might have shared with Church on his several visits are unknown, but the role was certainly limited by the time of his involvement. No substantive correspondence between client and architect have been found, suggesting (given the preservation of related records), that any written record was sparse. One of Vaux's drawings that survives (fig. 18) shows a circular terrace, similar to the driveway eventually built. We know from his background that Vaux would have been interested in the siting of the building and its relation to adjacent elements, such as the final approach drive with its supporting retaining wall, but on this drawing it is unclear if Vaux was illustrating Church's ideas or offering his own for Church's consideration. In any event, this drive and wall was only one element of Olana's designed landscape. Even close to the House, and certainly elsewhere, it was Church who made the decisions and who implemented the landscape work long before, and long after, Vaux's architectural involvement ended.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁷ Letter: FEC to EDP, 5/13/1870; and 5/21/1870 [AIHA].

²⁶⁸ Calvert Vaux, undated manuscript [Vaux Papers, New York Public Library].

²⁶⁹ Vaux was paid for his architectural services with three checks, the first two, dated: 12/8/1870 and 9/21/1871 (both to "Vaux, Withers & Co., Architects," for \$300 each); and a final installment, dated: 1/7/1873 (to "Olmsted, Vaux & Co.," for \$235.72) [DHA]. The basis for the arrangements, and Vaux's itemized billing, if these existed, are not available but from the records it seems that Vaux was paid for architectural work only. Additionally, there are no bills or checks for landscape consultation and there is no evidence that Frederick Law Olmsted (America's celebrated landscape architect and partner with Vaux at the time of the last billing to Church) ever visited Olana or was in anyway connected to the landscape design. In the past, the Olana landscape has been attributed, incorrectly, to both Olmsted and Vaux - see for example: Jeanne Goode, "American Pastoral: The Landscapes of A. J. Downing," *Garden Magazine*, Jan./Feb., 1987 and William Alex, *Calvert Vaux: Architect and Planner*, New York, NY: Ink, Inc., 1994, p. 69.

In May 1870, the House project began with the construction of a “Stable”²⁷⁰ located in a hollow about 100 feet north of, and about fifteen feet lower than, the house site which stood at about elevation 483 feet.²⁷¹ This building served initially as a dormitory and shop for the workman, and defined a service area and Stable yard on this side of the House.²⁷² Excavation for the House cellar began in mid-summer 1870 and work continued for two full years before the family could move into the upper floors in the fall of 1872.²⁷³ During this construction period, Church was continually and actively involved. More than a year after Vaux’s first visit, Church wrote: “I am building a house and am principally my own Architect. I give directions all day and draw plans and working drawings all night.”²⁷⁴

Probably in the summer of 1871, a reporter described Church’s development while looking out from the Prospect Park House Hotel across the river in Catskill:

. . . upon the grandest of the hill-tops, a shiny platform shows the basement of the country house which Mr. Church is building at the summit of his extensive lands, and near the rustic lodge [i.e. Cosy Cottage] and studio he has many Summers rested, and where in secluded leisure several of his masterpieces have been finished.²⁷⁵

The House construction generated considerable local interest related to the, “liberal ground proportions . . . [where] one could get lost in its cellar.”²⁷⁶ Of the landscape it was exclaimed:

How many hundred forest trees have been set out in its parks lately, and above all, how the artist’s beautiful wife has been seen riding across those red-veined hilltops upon a milk-white donkey, brought from the Orient, and - to the open mouthed admiration of the country folks - with her baby slung in the panier.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁰ The name, “Stable,” appears as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana. It was used consistently by Church over many years.

²⁷¹ Topographic Survey (fig. 115), by O’Brien, Gere and Quinn, L.L.S., 3/15/1967 [NYSOPRHP, Taconic State Park Region]. The Stable was built at about elevation 468 feet. All elevations cited or discussed in this report are taken from this survey.

²⁷² Letter: FEC to WHO, 6/25/1870 [DHA]. The Stable yard refers to the outdoor area on the east side of this building. There was a separate Stable yard on the west side. The service area refers to areas close to the north wall of the House. Short segments of driveway linked these utility areas.

²⁷³ A full historic structure report for the House is forthcoming. See Kelly, et al., pp. 135-146.

²⁷⁴ Letter: FEC to A.C. Goodman, 7/21/1871 [DHA].

²⁷⁵ “The Kaatskills, Their Attractions Enthusiastically Set Forth,” unidentified magazine/newspaper article, c. 1871 [VML].

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid. The donkey rides are described by Church - letter: FEC to WHO, 7/22/1871 [Princeton University Library].

The interest was confirmed in a newspaper account that called the new house “one of the prominent things now pointed out to the tourists and travellers.”²⁷⁸ Apparently, public curiosity led to violations of the Church’s privacy, with a visitor several years later relating that the Churches had been bothered by inquisitive strangers who would drive through the property and “peep into the windows at every point,” until Church was obliged to put up “a placard” warning unannounced visitors to not approach the House.²⁷⁹

The Churches stayed on the property from summer through the autumn of 1871, and the family was expanded in July 1871 when a daughter, Isabel Charlotte, nicknamed ‘Downie,’ was born.

During the summer of 1872, house construction continued and while substantially completed late that year, detailed work on the structure lasted for several more years. Work was reported still underway on the landscape close to the House in 1880 (see below).²⁸⁰ The essential landscape work close to the House included the formation of the lawn terraces along the south facade, the circular final approach drive and its supporting retaining wall, as well as the ample open “East Lawn”²⁸¹ fronting the entrance porch. The final grade of these earth forms close to the House were formed by partially raising and levelling using fill that included foundation excavation and rubble from the House construction.²⁸²

As a landscape feature, the House was now the property’s primary focus (fig. 28) and in turn it dictated a new landscape orientation for the property, with parkland, wooded entry drives and the panoramic views from the hilltop superseding the more modest agrarian associations of Cosy Cottage and its intimate farmstead setting.

4. Completing the Olana Landscape, 1873-1891

The second phase of Olana’s landscape development began in 1873, after the Churches moved into the main House. This period continued until about 1891, nearly 20

²⁷⁸ The Catskill Examiner, 8/31/1872.

²⁷⁹ Zabriskie.

²⁸⁰ Letter: FEC to EDP, 8/1/1880 [AIHA].

²⁸¹ The name, “Lawn,” appears as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana. For clarity, the name, “East Lawn,” will be used for the purposes of this report.

²⁸² Memorandum: Lois Feister and CLF to Dennis Wentworth (hereafter cited DW), 9/11/1990 [BHS]; and CLF to JAR, 4/23/1991 [BHS]. These investigations show that Church built the fill areas over time, with rough piles of refuse mixed with earlier (temporary ?) rough walls. Finally, the area was graded and topsoiled before seeding.

years, after which day-to-day supervision of the property was turned over to Church's son, Louis P. Church (1870-1943).

The situation in 1873 is illustrated on a Map of Columbia County prepared that year (fig. 20).²⁸³ The map shows the new House, the Studio building, Cosy Cottage, the old farmhouse, houses at each entrance, and the roads completed at that date.²⁸⁴ After 1873, the property evolved as a unified landscape garden composition that combined agricultural acreage, parkland, woods and water into a single unified entity. Farm activities seem to have remained generally consistent with the situation in 1870. Clearly, agricultural activity did not increase, and farming became more and more an adjunct to sophisticated residential life in the country. The Churches were getting older and the siting of the House at the top of the hill separated them to some extent from the property's agrarian activities. As will be shown, in the mid-1880s Church would remove substantial acreage from agricultural use, again to expand ornamental aspects of the landscape. Despite this evolution, Frederic Church continued to refer to the property as "The Farm" throughout his lifetime, indicating that for him farm operations remained at the heart of the property's purpose and sense of identity. Even in 1900 -- the year Church died -- Olana was described as a "big farm" in a local newspaper account.²⁸⁵

In about 1875, Church made changes to the North Entrance. Alterations to the Oak Hill-Hudson Road at its intersection with Olana's North Road allowed Church to secure a wider, more gracious outlet at this primary entrance point.²⁸⁶ This change may also have necessitated the removal of a building which is shown in this position on the 1873 map of the area.²⁸⁷ As part of these alterations, Church and his neighbors, Derick Hallenbeck and Dr. Gustavus S. Sabine, adjusted their property lines (fig. 79).²⁸⁸ With additional room, Church redesigned his entrance, developing a splayed arrangement with a new road

²⁸³ S.N. Beers, Atlas of Columbia County, N.Y., 1873.

²⁸⁴ One of these houses is shown located on the western side of the Lake, near the house on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road. The other is the house that seems to have been at the North Entrance. The major roads shown include Bethune Road (c. 1864-65), North Road (1869), and South Road as then configured. The label "Studio" appears on the north side of the Lake, something of a slip from its true location further uphill just north of the "F" in "Fred." Note that the Studio is shown on the east side of the South Road, as on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

²⁸⁵ [untitled notice], Coxsackie Union, 1/19/1900.

²⁸⁶ This development is documented in several correspondences - e.g., letter: G.S. Sabine to FEC, 1/6/1875 [DHA]. For a detailed discussion, see: RMT, "Master Landscape Restoration Plan - North Road, NYSOPRHP, 1991, p. 10 and attached illustrations [OSHS].

²⁸⁷ The 1873 map shows a black square, indicating a structure close to the North Entrance and this is labeled "F.E.C." As discussed earlier, a structure is also indicated here on the 1856 map (without identification), and possibly on the 1799 Penfield Map.

²⁸⁸ CCD, Book 54, page 125, dated: 7/12/1875, recorded: 7/12/1875; and Book 60, page 330-331, dated: 5/24/1877, recorded: 11/28/1877.

splitting off from the old to form a generous triangular-shaped open area fronting on the public road (fig. 22c). The new arrangement was a minor shortcut for those travelling to and from the City of Hudson, but more importantly it oriented the entrance to its primary destination and created a more expansive and elaborate, although still modest and rural sense of entry.

In the mid-1870s, the Churches were habitually in residence at Olana from the summer into the autumn, and typically stayed at the new House through the holiday season before retiring to New York City for the winter months.²⁸⁹ A reporter visiting the property in about 1876 stated, “the grounds are not yet finished in all their details,”²⁹⁰ confirming the situation before the active work that would occupy the next decade.

In 1877, Church sought advice and an estimate for a steam generated pump “to overcome the 250 ft. head of friction of 1,500 ft. pipe. . .”²⁹¹ This advice seems to have preceded the installation of a system used to pump water from the Lake to a cistern built on an artificial mound at the top of the hill, north of the House (elev. 495 ft.). From there, water could flow by gravity to the House.²⁹²

There was a surge of activity on the Lake before the spring of 1879. In December 1878, “Mr. George Herd” was hired to “work by the day for F.E. Church on the Pond at \$1 dollar per day.” He worked 14 days between December 6, 1878 and January 6, 1879.²⁹³ In May, Church declared, “the lake is overflowing, the birch canoe is ready. . .” (fig. 34)²⁹⁴ In total, the Lake required the removal of at least 40,000 cubic yards of muck.²⁹⁵ In one letter, Church whimsically estimated, “great quantity [of muck] not less than 5,000,000 loads.”²⁹⁶

²⁸⁹ One reporter claimed that Church “always gathers his children here [Olana] during the Christmas holidays,” (Bonnelle) suggesting that this became something of a tradition. Church’s presence on the property during December is documented for the years 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872 and in the 1880s after 1884.

²⁹⁰ “Homes of America V,” p. 248.

²⁹¹ Letter: Henry R. Worthington to A.L. Holley, 5/29/1877 [DHA].

²⁹² The water supply system at Olana has not been comprehensively studied. The situation changed over time. Wells were dug at the farm and uphill. After 1877, other work was undertaken - check: FEC to Henry R. Worthington, 11/6/1894 [DHA]. Louis Church recorded “putting down pump pipes” the following spring - letter: Louis P. Church (hereafter cited as LPC) to ICC, 3/27/1895 [DHA]. There were several cisterns and these were improved at various times, e.g., letter: William Donnelly to FEC, 11/26/1886 [DHA]: “The cistern is all complete and nice.” At that time, a metal water tank replaced (or augmented) the cistern. The pump was located near the Lake but its housing may have changed over the years. A pump house, located along the lower Farm Road, opposite the granary building, was in place by the end of Church’s lifetime.

²⁹³ Bill/Receipt: George Herd to FEC, 12/6/1878 [DHA]. Herd may have done excavation or other Lake construction. This is probably not ice cutting, December 6th being a bit early for such activities.

²⁹⁴ Letter: FEC to EDP, 5/19/1879 [AIHA]. No photograph shows this canoe. Later, a row boat was in use on the Lake.

²⁹⁵ Rough calculations based on a ten acre area excavated to a depth of three feet. This is equivalent to about 8,000 modern dump truck loads (5 cubic yards per load) - all removed by hand! Some of this

The flurry of Lake excavation in 1879 may have been related to Church's purchase of a 9-acre parcel at the southwest corner of the property in 1877, the so-called Red Hill lot (fig. 79).²⁹⁷ This acreage included a 750 foot frontage on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road south of the earlier entrance. Dominated by the steep Red Hill, the parcel also included more gradual topography that allowed Church to significantly improve the interest and drama of the "South Entrance"²⁹⁸ and South Road, now enhanced with the completion of the Lake. The road construction project seems to have been started in 1879, with a bill for twelve days of labor issued in May.²⁹⁹ The following winter, a friend wrote of "your new drive,"³⁰⁰ and six months later Church recording "two men blasting rocks on the new road."³⁰¹ The new South Entrance was at Olana's extreme southwest corner dramatically set beside the precipitous escarpment of Red Hill. From the entrance, the new portion of the South Road skirted the west slope of Red Hill before turning dramatically east through a low gap that brought the roadway to a point overlooking the south end of the Lake. The new alignment then continued along the west side of the Lake until it linked with older positions of the South Road that continued uphill. In this way, the Lake was made a feature both entering and exiting the property in this direction. Exiting the property, a final distant view toward the western mountains was attained after turning away from the Lake. The new South Entrance allowed Church to realize the full potential of an access point that he had earlier found undesirable. He abandoned the old entrance beside the house on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road. While there is no documentation, the house may have been dismantled at this same time.³⁰²

The last of Frederic Church's land acquisitions occurred in 1878 when the 50 acre, so-called north meadow lot was purchased (fig. 79).³⁰³ Taking in the north end of the hill, the north meadow was an important addition to Olana. Of the total, almost 30 acres was open agricultural land. At least initially this was a farm addition, with the open land a

excavation may have been achieved prior to Church's ownership with excavation of the area as a water source, and/or for cultivation while a family farm in the period 1794-1860. Dredging in the Lake in 1996 has revealed that some areas were excavated to varied depths, while other portions (as in the south end) were simply flooded. A full and expert investigation of these observations is not available at this time.

²⁹⁶ Letter: FEC to EDP, 6/22/1875 [AIHA].

²⁹⁷ CCD, Book 59, page 372, dated: 5/1/1877, recorded: 6/7/1877.

²⁹⁸ The name, "South Entrance," appears as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

²⁹⁹ Bill, Silvester Betts to FEC, 5/22/1879 [DHA].

³⁰⁰ Letter: Alfred L. Edwards to FEC, 2/12/1880 [DHA].

³⁰¹ Letter: FEC to EDP, 8/1/1880 [AIHA].

³⁰² The fate of the house is not recorded. The old entrance road was allowed to grass over. Today, the old road, unidentified foundations and related residential plantings (lilacs, barberry and myrtle), can be detected at the site of this residence.

³⁰³ CCD, Book 62, page 94, dated: 4/1/1878, recorded: 6/11/1878. The name, "north meadow," is used for the purposes of this report.

valuable addition both for hay production and grazing. Cows, cattle and horses were apparently herded from the barn area, past Cosy Cottage, down a “Farm Road”³⁰⁴ to the North Road and into the fenced fields. Coincidentally in 1878, William D. Donnelly was hired as the farmer.³⁰⁵ He would remain the principal overseer for almost twenty years, until the end of Church’s active involvement in the 1890s.

In 1880, after several experiments, Olana was adopted as the property’s name - an appropriate moment as the farm had evolved into an expansive residential estate.³⁰⁶ The name, Olana, refers to a specific place in ancient Persia, identified by the 2nd-century geographer Strabo, meaning an “elevated stronghold overlooking a fertile river valley in ancient Persia.”³⁰⁷ It was said to have been selected by Mrs. Church.³⁰⁸

In 1880, Church spoke of building a “two acre garden below and east of the lake.”³⁰⁹ This refers to a Kitchen Garden (fig. 44).³¹⁰ Earlier, it seems that a plot of ground closer to the old farmhouse, as well as a fenced enclosure east of Cosy Cottage, served as kitchen gardens.³¹¹ After 1880, the new Kitchen Garden may have been related to the completion of the Lake, which provided it with a system of irrigation.³¹² Water supplied from the Lake also served the farm area.³¹³ Perhaps as part of this engineering, the Lake was altered, with Church reporting that “one mason [is] building the dam of the Lake higher.”³¹⁴ The work elsewhere included areas close to the House, with Church

³⁰⁴ The name, “Farm Road,” appears as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana on this road segment leading to the North Road. This may have been an old access route for the farm even before Church’s ownership. This road is referred to in this report as the “lower Farm Road,” to distinguish it from others (see below).

³⁰⁵ Letter: FEC to EDP, 3/14/1878 [AIHA].

³⁰⁶ Letter: Alfred L. Edwards to FEC, 2/12/1880 [DHA], and FEC to EDP, 8/1/1880 [AIHA]. For background information see: Gerald Carr, “What’s in a Name: The Genesis of Frederic Church’s Olana,” 1988, unpublished manuscript [OSHS]. Carr found references to the names “Arlimna,” “Ontiora,” “TerHum,” and “Horizon,” used between 1872 and 1878. Also, see: Gerald Carr, *Olana Landscapes*, New York, NY: Rizzoli, 1989, p. 2.

³⁰⁷ Carr, “What’s in a Name,” p. 9. See also, Kelly et al., p. 144.

³⁰⁸ Bonnelle.

³⁰⁹ Letter: FEC to EDP, 8/1/1880 [AIHA].

³¹⁰ Church later referred to this as “our lower garden” - letter: FEC to Isabel Church Black (hereafter cited as ICB), 7/17/1898 [DHA]. The word, “Garden,” appears as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana. As this was Olana’s principle kitchen garden late in Frederic Church’s lifetime, the name, “Kitchen Garden,” will be used for the purposes of this report.

³¹¹ A barn is shown north of the farmhouse on the 1834 map of Olana (fig. 10), suggesting a farm arrangement quite different from Church’s later configuration. In this situation, a kitchen garden closer to the farmhouse and earlier barn would have been likely. The presence of a separate fenced garden east of Cosy Cottage, called for the purposes of this report the “cottage garden,” is documented on the 1886 Plan of Olana and several photographs (fig. 36).

³¹² Letter: FEC to ICB, 7/17/1898 [DHA].

³¹³ Interview, Lloyd J. Boice (hereafter cited as LJB) by Aileen and Peter Stevenson, 6/24/1969 (hereafter cited as “Boice Interview, June 1969”) [OSHS]. It is unclear when water supply to the farm buildings was added.

³¹⁴ Letter: FEC to EDP, 8/1/1880 [AIHA]. The dam was constructed using two parallel masonry walls with fill between forming a carriage road on top of the dam. This was a portion of the Lake Road. When

noting in the same letter, “two men laying out and grading the grounds between the House and Stable.”³¹⁵ In July 1880, the Churches were at Lake George, and in the autumn they visited Lake Millinocket and North Carolina.³¹⁶

During the summer of 1881, Church planned to have a photographer come to take pictures of the property, including the House and “some of the more interesting views.”³¹⁷ In May 1883, the Churches received a request to bring a group of Vassar College (Poughkeepsie, NY) students to Olana. Church replied that “we take pleasure in giving a favorable response to your request. . .”³¹⁸ While the visit is not otherwise documented, this was not the first such visit. A Vassar group came in May 1879 when it was reported: “They were in high artistic and aesthetic clover and the gilt-edged minutes fled amain,”³¹⁹ indicating that a visit to Olana was something special. The Vassar women were no doubt exposed to the art of landscape gardening as part of their experience on the property.

Isabel Church’s mother, Emma Carnes, made extended stays at Olana until her death early in 1886. Beginning in 1882, her diary records that survive describe a daily routine of relaxed recreation, including numerous carriage rides, both within and outside the property, visiting with the farmer’s wife and neighbors, touring the Kitchen Garden and rowing on the Lake.³²⁰ In June 1884, Susan Hale made her first visit to Olana and her letters reveal much about life there in this period. Her initial impressions were magical:

The place is so large I can walk miles without going off of it. It is very pretty, great avenues of trees, a pond, nooks of shade and always the wide open view of the river and mountains.³²¹

At this date, Miss Hale described Frederic Church as, “very stiff and lame, but lovely.”³²² As early as 1869, as he began work on the House, Church was bothered by rheumatism which quickly disabled him and restricted his painting for the remainder of his life. In response, starting in the winter of 1883, the Churches, and later Frederic Church alone,

the dam was excavated in 1981, the older level was discernible, suggesting that the final dam height was raised about 2 feet higher than the earlier level - Memorandum: CLF to JAR, 5/12/1994 [BHS].

³¹⁵ Letter: FEC to EDP, 8/1/1880 [AIHA].

³¹⁶ Ibid., and Kelly et al., p. 170.

³¹⁷ Letter: FEC to EDP, 7/15/1881 [AIHA]. These photographs, if they were taken, have not been identified.

³¹⁸ Letter: FEC to Miss Frances G. Markham, 5/19/1883 [DHA].

³¹⁹ The Daily Graphic (New York City), 5/29/1879. This visit was also chronicled in The World (NY), 5/24/1879.

³²⁰ Emma Osgood Carnes (hereafter cited as EC), diary entry [DHA].

³²¹ Letter: Susan Hale to Lucretia P. Hale, 7/6/1884, in, Caroline P. Atkinson, ed. Letters of Susan Hale. Boston MA and New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2nd ed., 1933, p. 142. Miss Hale visited the property periodically until the end of Church’s lifetime, and thereafter until her own death in 1910.

³²² Letter: Susan Hale to Lucretia Hale, 6/29/1884, quoted in Atkinson, 140.

traveled to Mexico where, as Church said: "I hope to find the climate good for me and bad for rheumatism."³²³

The family were at Olana throughout the 1884 season and by autumn Church was reporting:

five men [are] building a road, . . . I have made about 1-3/4 miles of road this season, opening new and beautiful views. I can make more and better landscapes in this way than by tampering with canvas and paint in the studio.³²⁴

The "Ridge Road"³²⁵ (1/2 mile) and the Lake road³²⁶ (1/2 mile), both built in 1884, constitute much of this road construction.³²⁷ The road around the Lake is documented as underway in July 1884, when Emma Carnes noted: "Mr. C[hurch] & Miss [Susan] Hale marked out the road around the pond."³²⁸ This was a connector road linking the South Road to the lower Farm Road around the south and east side of the Lake. The purchase of the north meadow in 1878 allowed the development of the Ridge Road (figs. 48 to 51). This was one of Olana's notable ornamental roadways, that is, intended for beauty, not utility. In August 1884, Emma Carnes recorded that "Mr. C[hurch] out all a.m. at his new road, north end of the place,"³²⁹ and a few days later: "I walked from North View seat to where new road will join Bethune road."³³⁰ In September Mrs. Carnes, "drove on new road as far as woods [i.e., the portion of the road in the meadow], very rough now, but will be beautiful in views."³³¹ After road development, grazing was eliminated along the immediate edges of the Ridge Road, with a new fence erected out of sight lower on the slope below the new road (fig. 49).³³² This restriction on grazing meant that the ground around the Ridge Road could be planted and/or selectively returned to second-growth

³²³ Letter: FEC to EDP, 9/11/1883 [AIHA].

³²⁴ Letter: FEC to EDP, 10/18/1884 [AIHA].

³²⁵ The name, "Ridge Road," appears as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana. The name is also used in correspondences - e.g., FEC to WHO, 4/21/1888 [DHA].

³²⁶ This name, "Lake road," was not used as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana. For clarity, it is used for the purposes of this report.

³²⁷ Church seems to have exaggerated the length of road under construction in 1884, although he may have been including roads planned but not yet in place. Later, it was reported that Olana's road system totaled "six or seven miles" (Bonnelle). The actual measurements, using modern survey information unavailable in Church's lifetime, show that the road system totals approximately 5 miles, in the following breakdown: North Road - 1.00 miles; South Road - 1.00 miles; Bethune Road - .50 miles; Ridge Road - .50 miles; Lake Road - .50 miles; Crown Hill Road - .40 miles; farm roads (miscellaneous) - 1.10 miles.

³²⁸ EC, diary entry, 7/3/1884 [DHA].

³²⁹ Ibid., 8/23/1884; and 8/28/1884 [DHA]. "Mr C off to superintend his new road!"

³³⁰ Ibid., 8/31/1884 [DHA].

³³¹ Ibid., 9/4/1884 [DHA].

³³² This fence line was constructed using barbed wire fitted to wood posts and was shown on the 1886 Plan of Olana. It was subsequently dismantled. A post and a roll of old wire have been found on the site.

which could then be managed as parkland to enhance the views. The Ridge Road corridor was not intended to be an agricultural landscape but occupied about 8-1/2 acres of former agricultural land, now given over to the purposes of landscape gardening.

A year after the development of the Ridge Road and Lake road, Church built another ornamental route, this time from the Lake to the top of Crown Hill in the southeast corner of the property (fig. 22b). In August, Emma Carnes wrote: "Mr. C is making another drive, thinks its a secret!"³³³ A week later Mrs Carnes reported: "Drove P.M. over the last new road which was meant for a surprise but has been suspected all along."³³⁴ It is easy to see how this road could have been a secret given its location in the most distant and inaccessible southeast corner of Olana (fig. 22b). The road began in the woods east of the Lake, looping around a pocket of wetland³³⁵ before ascending out into the open (former agricultural land) to the hilltop. At the summit, Church built a carriage turn-around. From this height (349 ft.), the view was panoramic, with a focus on the House and park at a higher elevation to the north, but also including the farm buildings (about 80 feet lower in elevation) and a full exposure toward the Taconic Hills, east (figs. 45 and 46). As he had done on the Ridge Road, Church constructed a new field fence to restrict grazing close to the new road.³³⁶ This fence was located approximately 75 feet down slope from the turn-around, where it was out of sight. It was constructed using wood posts and barbed wire (fig. 104). Extant remnants show the wire to have been of a type called "Buckthorn," which was patented in 1881 and out of production before 1900.³³⁷ The positioning of this fence meant that about 17 acres of former agricultural land had been dedicated to the Crown Hill Road corridor and its parkland setting. This area was allowed to grow over time into a composition of foreground vegetation to compliment the more distant views (see: Section III - Design Description). In 1885, Church discussed the procurement of a "brand new hogshead . . . I depended upon it for watering some young trees I set out this spring."³³⁸ The location of these new trees is not documented, but they may have been planted as part of the extensive road development taking place in this period.³³⁹

³³³ EC, diary entry, 8/28/1885 [DHA].

³³⁴ Ibid., 9/7/1885 [DHA].

³³⁵ This wetland is labeled, "swamp," on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

³³⁶ Shown on the 1886 Plan. Remnants of this fence line survive.

³³⁷ Henry D. and Frances T. McCallum, The Wire That Fenced The West, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965, pp. 259-260, as quoted in, memorandum: CLF to JAR, 5/13/1991 [OSHS]. This wire has been found by the author in several other areas of Olana.

³³⁸ Letter: FEC to EDP, 7/8/1885 [AIHA].

³³⁹ Present day observations suggest that trees, especially sugar maples, were planted along the road edge in at least portions of the Ridge Road and Crown Hill Road.

Farm activity also continued to provide interest. Church humorously reported: "My [kitchen] garden has been a great success - Mexican corn 16 feet high - my gardener measures but 5 feet and knocks off the ears with a club."³⁴⁰ In April 1886, while the Churches were still in Mexico, the farmer, William Donnelly, wrote to report the effects of "Heavy rain" on the roads.³⁴¹ On returning to Olana, in the summer of 1886, Church wrote to a friend that he had "remodelled and repaired buildings [,] built new ones - in fact have put my house in order pretty generally."³⁴² The farm was now an ongoing operation.

And Church was not done with road building. In June 1886, he wrote to his friend E.D. Palmer: "I have laid out a new approach to the House, which I shall go at as soon as my men get through with the haying, now more than half done."³⁴³ This refers to the last major road built by Church, called for the purposes of this report, the New Approach Road. This was a modification of the South Road. It was built through the parkland on the slope immediately south of the House, and extended from the site of Church's Studio to the East Lawn, coming out onto the final approach drive where the first view of the House had been revealed when travelling the earlier South Road (fig. 27). The new road had the added advantage of avoiding close contact with the service area and Stable yard north of the House, so that with its many views in the upper reaches of the park, it was a more ornamental and scenic approach. While planned and first discussed in 1886, actual construction of this road seems to have been delayed. It is not shown on Frederic Joseph Church's plan of Olana completed in September 1886 (see figure 22).³⁴⁴

Frederic Joseph Church's colored plan of Olana (fig. 22) is a unique document, confirming Church's achievement in developing the landscape over the previous 26 years. In 1886, Frederic Joseph Church was a 20 year-old college student with a course on land surveying. He drew the plan of Olana as part of his academic efforts.³⁴⁵ The plan, called herein the "1886 Plan," shows the layout and planting of the property at a critical period late in Frederic Church's residency. The plan shows many aspects of the property not

³⁴⁰ Letter: FEC to EDP, 10/21/1885 [AIHA].

³⁴¹ Letter: William Donnelly to FEC, 4/7/1886 [DHA].

³⁴² Letter: FEC to Charles D. Warner, 8/22/1886 [DHA].

³⁴³ Letter: FEC to EDP, 6/20/1886 [AIHA].

³⁴⁴ Ink, pencil and water color on paper (22-1/8" x 36-1/4") [OL.1984.39].

³⁴⁵ Despite a proclaimed scale of "160 feet to an in[ch]," the 1886 Plan is not an accurate measured survey. Some dimensions are close to actual, but others vary considerably from the known situation. The plan shows numerous offset lines and it may be that Frederic Joseph Church was presenting his understanding of their use in surveying. The plan may also have been an exercise in survey drafting. Either purpose would not require accurate scaling. After the plan was completed, Frederic Joseph Church seems to have referred to it as a "free hand drawing," which it certainly was. - Letter: Frederic Joseph Church (hereafter cited as FJC) to FEC, 9/16/1886 [DHA]. For details of the circumstances related to the preparation of this plan, see: Ellen McClelland Lesser (hereafter cited as EMcL), "Landscape Research Report," 8/15/1986, pp. 20-23 [OSHS].

otherwise recorded. For example, the 1886 Plan reveals the presence of a “Summer House,” shown located on a knoll directly south of the House, close to where the new approach road was being planned (fig. 22a). Perhaps this is the “seat back of studio,” mentioned in 1884,³⁴⁶ but it is otherwise a structure that does not appear in any written record or on any photograph of the area. Another landscape feature shown on the 1886 Plan is the “North View,” a spot at the edge of the woods at the highest elevation of the north meadow, over which the views north were fully exposed at the highest possible elevation. There was probably a seat at the North View where one could pause to take in the prospect.³⁴⁷

The 1886 Plan of Olana shows the nearly completed road system, including two alignments that are labeled “Farm Road.” There is a lower Farm Road which followed along the north side of the Lake from the South Road to the farm buildings, and then onward past Cosy Cottage to link with the North Road. This alignment, on which livestock were led to the north meadow, was over generally level ground. A separate uphill Farm Road extended up the slope of the park between the lower Farm Road and the South Road -- a rise of more than 150 feet. The Farm Roads intersected with the cottage driveway and the Lake road to form a distinctive five points intersection³⁴⁸ near the northeast corner of the Lake (fig. 22a).

The 1886 Plan of Olana is also valuable for its depiction of the tree patterns, confirming areas of open and wooded land. Photographs suggest that individual trees are not accurately depicted, but the general layout does seem to be accurate.³⁴⁹ Distinct surface treatments, such as meadows, wetland, woodland and ploughed land, are differentiated by separate colors. The Kitchen Garden (labeled “Garden” on the plan), as well as fence lines, are clearly indicated. The new fence lines installed below the Ridge Road and Crown Hill Road in the previous few years also appear on the plan. In total, the 1886 Plan is the most important single piece of documentation in describing the landscape late in Frederic Church’s lifetime (see: Section III - Design Description).

³⁴⁶ EC, diary entry, 9/9/1884 [DHA]

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 7/10/1884 [DHA].

³⁴⁸ The name, “five-point intersection,” is used for the purposes of this report.

³⁴⁹ The accuracy of Frederic Joseph Church’s plan presents interpretive issues. For example, the layout of roads is clear from the site’s existing conditions, so that the inaccuracies of the layout shown on the plan are not a difficulty. That the plan shows these roads as in existence (or not) in 1886 is very helpful. The buildings, while misshapen, can be interpreted, while information on ploughed ground is unique -- with no other source for this documentation. Still, some components, for example individual trees shown in otherwise open turf area, are highly inaccurate (see additional discussion in Section III - Design Description).

Church's interest in ornamental landscape effects seems to have remained active in the last decades of his life. In 1886, he told his friend, Erastus Dow Palmer that he was "clearing up underbrush in places and this work requires close supervision,"³⁵⁰ indicating the level of his involvement in directing ornamental improvements in this period. Farm improvements and upkeep continued. In 1886, Church spoke of "raising my farm Stable and adjoining building 18 inches, preparatory to putting on a large addition. I also expect to put an addition to my Stable at the House."³⁵¹ The addition to the "farm Stable" may have been the "wagon house,"³⁵² not shown on a 1886 Plan of Olana, but seen in a photograph from about 1906 (fig. 44). Uphill, Church installed an extension to the rear (west) of the Stable near the House.³⁵³ At an undetermined date a coachman's dwelling and connecting hyphen were added to the north end of the Stable.

In 1887, Frederic Joseph Church wrote to his father from college: "I have seen a tutor, a Mr. Howe . . . He has us in surveying & we all like him very much. . . Being a very good surveyor, he can help me with the road etc. next summer."³⁵⁴ This seems to be a reference to the "new approach to the House" mentioned by Church in 1886 -- at this date the only road section not yet completed. If Frederic Joseph's estimate was correct, the New Approach Road may have been built, or completed, in the summer of 1888, after its initial mention, and possible layout, two years earlier.³⁵⁵ Whatever its exact date of construction, the new alignment began along the South Road near the Studio. To create an ample turning radius, Church re-routed the South Road to loop around the south and east side of the Studio building, abandoning the earlier alignment west of the Studio that is shown on the 1886 Plan. From there, the new road turned back toward the west and then curved through the park as it ascended the hillside just below and south of the House. The New Approach Road joined the final approach drive (that circled the East Lawn) at a point opposite the front door of the House (fig. 27). Church's plans for a studio wing attached to the House may have influenced his development of the New Approach Road. When

³⁵⁰ Letter: FEC to EDP, 6/20/1886 [AIHA].

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² The name, "wagon house," was used later, and is used for this purpose of this report. Peter Stevenson (1972), stated without clear documentatinn that the "wagon house" was built in 1861 - and cited a bill dated: 7/1/1891 as evidence (Chap. II).

³⁵³ Letter: FEC to EDP, 6/20/1886 [AIHA].

³⁵⁴ Letter: FJC to FEC, 6/4/1887 [DHA]. Frederic Joseph Church's proposed visit to help with the roads did not materialize. In August, he wrote again from Colorado, asking if he could come to Olana for a month: "I could be useful about the place, superintending roads, the garden, etc. - letter: FJC to FEC, 8/30/1887 [DHA].

³⁵⁵ Roenke and Matejka, "Archaeology Report," July 1979 [BHS]. Excavations were undertaken along the upper portion of this road. Artifacts uncovered were described as of "late 19th century" origins (p. 27), suggesting the road's construction in the "latter years of his [i.e., Church's] life" (p. 35).

installed, it offered views of the south facade that could be experienced from no other accessible vantage point. With the studio wing added to the west end of the House in the same period (1888-1890), this vantage point may have been especially appreciated. While Church planted the intervening ground with trees (fig. 24), these did not form an immediate screen (see: Section III - Design Description).³⁵⁶ The new road also opened up extensive views outward and passed through a highly scenic area where trees (many white birches) had matured since their initial planting in the 1860s.

The New Approach Road seems to have prompted installation of a new flower garden, which was seen as a feature from the new road (fig. 32).³⁵⁷ The garden was a long border (approx. 160 ft. x 15 ft.), with about 1,740 sq. ft. cultivated beds and a center path, set against the stone retaining wall that edged the driveway above. Evidence for the installation of this garden is circumstantial but persuasive. In the autumn of 1887, there was a bill for “38 loads of manure at \$3 per load.”³⁵⁸ In the spring of 1888 there were two other bills that together document the delivery of 49 loads of manure,³⁵⁹ with subsequent procurements later.³⁶⁰ All this indicated a substantial attempt to enrich soils for gardening.³⁶¹ In line with these events, beginning in October 1887, there were three orders of plants purchased from a nurseryman in Hudson that appear to have supplied the new garden. The autumn 1887 order³⁶² was small, about 30 plants, but in April/May 1888, an extensive order for about 200 plants was billed.³⁶³ This invoice included 17 different plants (identified by genus names only, e.g., “pansies,” “asters,” “verbenas,” etc.). There were several vines suitable for growing on a trellis fitted to the retaining wall that backed the new garden. While these two orders alone would not have filled the

³⁵⁶ The studio wing was under construction early in the summer of 1888, and it may have been planned earlier. See, letters: FEC to WHO, 4/21/1888; and FEC to Mr. Brownell, 6/7/1888 and 7/19/1888 [DHA]; and letter: FEC to EDP, 9/11/1888 [AIHA]. The studio wing was declared “in working order” late in 1890 - letter: FEC to Jervis McEntee, 12/21/1890 [Archives of American Art]. Photographs show that Church planted the sloping frontage south of the lawn terraces with trees and shrubs but these were immature in 1890 and did not block views to, or from, the House in Church’s lifetime.

³⁵⁷ There is no documentation of a flower garden in the area of the House prior to this date. One drawing in the Olana collection, attributed to Frederic Church, shows an elaborate parterre layout situated on the East Lawn (OL.1982.828). It is not known if this garden layout was ever constructed. Flower beds may have been cut into the lawns at various periods but if so, specifics are unrecorded.

³⁵⁸ Receipt: Thomas Deady to FEC, 11/5/1887 [DHA].

³⁵⁹ Bill: Thomas Deady to FEC, 5/10/1888 and 6/15/1888. The size of the “load” is not specified, but it probably equaled a wagon or cart used.

³⁶⁰ Bills: Thomas Deady to FEC, 8/4/1888, 9/17/1888, 10/20/1888 and 5/1/1889 [DHA].

³⁶¹ The total, 87 loads of manure delivered between late 1887 and spring, 1888, seems ample for enhancing soils in the new flower garden. Each load could be expected to be worked into 20 sq. ft. of ground 5 ft. sq.), equalling about 1,740 sq. ft., the approximate size of the flower beds.

³⁶² Bill: R.W. Allen to ICC, 1/1/1888 (for purchases on October 13, 1887) [DHA]. No plant names were included on this list.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 7/18/1888. Plants were listed here (see: Section III - Design Description).

garden,³⁶⁴ the numbers and type of plants would be a substantial portion and would seem to have had no alternate destination. A year later, another large order of perennials was made.³⁶⁵ Again, the 100 or so plants were probably used in this new flower garden. From the original plant lists, it is difficult to speculate as to the intended design of the beds, but it was most likely mixed, using a changing combination of flowering perennials and annuals in a mingled or scattered arrangement. There does not seem to have been any woody shrubs included and no spring bulbs or autumn flowering species were recorded, although these may have been present over time. The mix thought to have characterized this garden inspired its modern name -- the mingled garden -- in Church's period probably referred to simply as the garden, or the flower garden.³⁶⁶

Set below the retaining wall, the mingled garden could not be seen from the house so that the natural setting of the hilltop was left uncompromised. The garden was a feature along the New Approach Road which is thought to have been completed in 1888. It is probably to this garden that Mrs. Church referred in the summer of 1890 when she wrote to her daughter, Downie: "I made Boca [i.e., the family dog] go down with me to see after your garden. . . The garden looked well but dry so I returned to the house for the dipper, and new watering pot - armed with which Boca and I again went down hill, and I gave the grateful plants a good drink."³⁶⁷

In August, 1887, billings reveal the purchase of equipment related to excavation: "1 mattock & handle; 1 pick; 1 shovel."³⁶⁸ Three days later, Church wrote his biographer, Charles D. Warner, "I am busy Landscape Architecturing. I have nearly completed a cliff about a hundred feet in height."³⁶⁹ This might be a reference to Church's early work on the studio wing, the only location near the House that would fit the description of "a cliff." In this case, the "Landscape Architecturing" may refer to clearing on the escarpment to prepare the site for the studio addition, and/or opening views from the newly planned wing. Still, active architectural planning for the studio wing does not seem to have started

³⁶⁴ 230 perennials might be expected to occupy about 850 sq. ft., or about half the total cultivated area of the flower garden.

³⁶⁵ Bill: R.W. Allen to FEC, 7/11/1889 [DHA]. Plants were listed.

³⁶⁶ The name, "Victorian Garden," was initially used to describe this garden when it was restored in the mid-1970s (see below). Later, the name, "mingled garden" -- a term used by A.J. Downing (Landscape Gardening, 7th ed., 1865, p. 379) -- was thought to be more descriptive of the intended plantings. The name, "mingled garden," is used for the purposes of this report.

³⁶⁷ Letter: ICC to ICB, 7/19/1890 [DHA]. While not mentioned, there may have been a water supply near the garden, so that Mrs. Church would not have had to return to the House to refill the "new watering pot."

³⁶⁸ Bill: J.J. Rogerson (Hardware) to FEC, 1/5/1888; transaction dated: 8/12/1887 [DHA].

³⁶⁹ Letter: FEC to Charles D. Warner, 8/15/1887 [DHA].

before April 1888,³⁷⁰ so that this singular direct reference to “landscape architecturing” at Olana is unclear.

Church did not use a professional architect for the studio wing. Instead, he chose to design the wing himself, treating the work in a relaxed way for his enjoyment while on the property.³⁷¹ Perhaps as a result, Church experienced delays and some difficulty in the construction, and the studio wing was not completed until 1890. Unneeded, Church dismantled (or perhaps moved) the earlier Studio, probably in 1888.³⁷²

A map of Columbia County, dated 1888 (fig. 23),³⁷³ shows the property as it had evolved to this point and confirms changes since an earlier but similar map dated 1873 (fig. 20). In 1888, the House is labeled “Res.” Black squares, used to represent structures, identify the Stable and the Studio. Six separate squares are shown in the area of the farm buildings, but only the “Cottage” is labeled. All the roads built since the 1873 map are shown, including the Ridge Road, Lake road and the Crown Hill Road; but not the New Approach Road.³⁷⁴

1888 also saw some controversy related to the siting of telegraph lines along the north side of the property, with an official of American Telephone & Telegraph writing to Church:

I regret exceedingly that you have had so much annoyance in the matter of erecting the lines of this company at your place. I instructed the Foreman in charge of the work, not to leave your neighborhood until he had fully satisfied you in every particular. I will call upon you during the coming month and examine into the matters you refer to in your letter and arrange to have changes made to harmonize with your views, etc. ³⁷⁵

Frederic Church had created a landscape garden and he was not shy about defending the result of his aesthetic impulses.

In 1889, the Churches were in residence throughout the season. There were still new experiences at the property, with Church exclaiming over a geological curiosity, “a

³⁷⁰ Letter: FEC to WHO, 4/21/1888 [DHA]. “I am making plans for the new studio.”

³⁷¹ Church inherited a substantial sum from his father’s estate in this period.

³⁷² Jervis McEntee, diary entry, 7/18/1888 [Archives of American Art]. Excavation shows that the Studio was bypassed in constructing the New Approach Road, so that its removal could have come after that road was operational.

³⁷³ S.N. Beers *Atlas of Columbia County, New York*, 1888.

³⁷⁴ Included are the Lake road (1884) Ridge Road (1884), Crown Hill Road (1885). “Crown Hill,” “Red Hill,” and the “Lake” are also labeled. The structures at the entrances, shown on a similar map of 1873, are no longer indicated. Both are thought to have been removed between 1873 and 1888.

³⁷⁵ Letter: E.P. Meany to FEC, 1/31/1888 [DHA]. Also, see letter: E.D. Ferguson to FEC, 1/20/1888 [DHA].

glacial pot-hole” discovered in the shale bank at the base of Red Hill,³⁷⁶ and describing the continued daily joys of a routine, as when Mrs. Church “drives out mornings and evenings and enjoys the shade of our woods.”³⁷⁷ The studio wing was reported, “not yet completed.”³⁷⁸ In November, “two thousand and eighty seven young evergreens”³⁷⁹ arrived and were presumably planted on the property that autumn, although the locations are not recorded. In the spring of 1890, there was an extensive order for flower seeds, in addition to the usual order for vegetable seeds.³⁸⁰ These came by mail and there is no record of any plants being purchased that year from the nurseryman in Hudson, perhaps indicating the end of initial plantings of the mingled garden.

A reporter visited Olana during the summer of 1890, and an article on the property appeared in the Boston Sunday Herald in September.³⁸¹ The article described “the art of the landscape gardener” at Olana, and concluding that “the multitude of trees planted under Mr. Church’s direction a quarter of a century ago now give convincing evidence of his wise foresight . . .”

The Churches were at Olana in December 1890 for the holidays, and Church stayed at Olana throughout the winter working in his new studio wing.³⁸²

5. Louis P Church - Dutiful Son, 1892-1900

At the close of the summer season in 1890, the Churches’ son, Louis P. Church, age 20, took the first steps to strike out on his own, leading to his acceptance of a job in Hartford, Connecticut.³⁸³ Louis would leave behind a social circle of friends that included an off and on girlfriend, Sally B. Good.³⁸⁴ Perhaps jolted by Louis’s departure, the elderly Mr. and Mrs. Church decided the time had come to act; they would offer Louis the

³⁷⁶ Letter: FEC to Charles D. Warner, 9/11/1889 [Watkinson Library, Trinity College, Hartford, CT]; and Henry F. Osborn, “A Glacial Pot-Hole in the Hudson River Shales Near Catskill, New York,” The American Naturalist, Vol. XXXIV, No. 397, 1900.

³⁷⁷ Letter: FEC to Mr. Brownell, 9/4/1889 [DHA].

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Letter: LPC to Sally B. Good (i.e., Sally Good Church after her marriage to LPC in 1901, hereafter cited as SGC), 11/4/1889 [DHA].

³⁸⁰ Receipts: Price & Reed to FEC, 3/31/1890; and Peter Henderson & Co. to FEC, 5/16/1890 [DHA].

³⁸¹ Bonnelle.

³⁸² Letter: FEC to EDP, 12/28/1890 and 4/19/1891 [AIHA].

³⁸³ Letter: M. W. Graves to FEC, 9/1/1890; and LPC to ICC, undated (c. 1890) [DHA].

³⁸⁴ Memorandum entitled: “Olana’s 20th century Archive Transcriptions,” KLG to Karen Zukowski, 2/8/1995 [OSHS]. In this binder, KLG excerpts from Louis Church’s and Sally B. Good’s letters and diary entries, and provides a portrait of their personal lives and friendships in the 1890s.

position of property superintendent. Louis accepted his parents' proposal in October 1891.³⁸⁵ Mrs. Church wrote her daughter: "There is much to be looked into at Olana - and Father can not, nor cares to, do it."³⁸⁶

Thus began a period of transition, lasting nine years, when Olana's day-to-day regimen was removed from Frederic Church's direct concern. Yet, even with his involvement lessened, Church was clearly in charge of the property throughout the 1890s. In the very summer that Louis was offered the position of superintendent, a visitor commented on Frederic Church's authority, saying: "the boys [i.e., Theodore and Louis] try to interest themselves in the horses & dogs - & in natural history. Mr. C won't let them give an order, or touch anything on the place."³⁸⁷ This comment indicates how all encompassing the landscape composition was in Frederic Church's mind, even this late in his lifetime.

In this limited context, Louis was given formal "full authority" over the long-term farmer, William Donnelly,³⁸⁸ and within a season Louis's salary was doubled.³⁸⁹ Initially, his role must have been minimized by the stability of Olana's operations, and his youthful inexperience. At first it seems most notable that he stayed on the property when his parents were away -- which was more often and for longer periods during the 1890s. Louis's presence was a reassurance to his parents, especially to his mother. In November 1891, Louis's letter mentioned the "fern bed," located below the wall at the carriage turn-around, and he reassured his mother in a typical passage from these years: "Your plants look fairly, William takes good care of them."³⁹⁰ A year later, Louis was building a Greenhouse, located east of the House along the older, now abandoned South Road approach (fig. 117).³⁹¹ This project seems to have been at Louis's initiative with Isabel Church describing to her daughter, "the green house I am to have."³⁹² The Greenhouse (fig. 31) was located away from the entrance roads in a low-lying pocket screened from view.³⁹³ The next spring, while still wintering in the south, Mrs. Church wrote: "Oh! but

³⁸⁵ Letter: LPC to FEC, 10/26/1891 [DHA].

³⁸⁶ Letter: ICC to ICB, 12/13/1891 [DHA].

³⁸⁷ Letter: Grace King to [a friend], 7/17/1891 [Collection of John Coxe, courtesy Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries].

³⁸⁸ Letter: LPC to FEC, 10/26/1891 [DHA].

³⁸⁹ Letter: ICC to ICB, 12/8/1892 [DHA].

³⁹⁰ Letter: LPC to ICC, 11/20/1891 [DHA]. William seems to be a reference to William McKenna.

³⁹¹ While the Greenhouse site has not been investigated in detail, its approximate location is apparent on the ground.

³⁹² Letter: ICC to ICB, 9/22/1892 [DHA]. The Greenhouse was dismantled in about 1921 - interview transcript, Mrs. Vera Dietz by JAR and R. Eckerle, 6/3/1985 and 6/17/1985 (hereafter cited as "Dietz Interview, June 1985") [OSHS].

³⁹³ Dietz Interview, June 1985 [OSHS]. A well located in this area might have been in place before the Greenhouse construction.

I miss you, you dearest of sons . . . How thankful I am that you are at home ‘to save’ at least ‘the corn crib and ice house.’³⁹⁴ The circumstances whereby Louis Church saved the Corn Crib and Ice House are not specified, but it seems that Louis was less a vital cog in Olana’s operations than his parents’ eyes and ears while they were away. Continuity was a valued circumstance as the Churches reached their old age. No doubt the Churches discussed Louis’s role and considered the possibility that he would someday inherit Olana.

With less expressed enthusiasm than Mrs. Church, Louis’s father wrote giving instructions, forwarding seeds and offering advice.³⁹⁵ By the start of the winter of 1894, at this point all but engaged to Sally B. Good, but alone at Olana with his brother Theodore, Louis reflected that he was “not needed” and might leave the property to get a real job, if that is what Sally Good thought best.³⁹⁶ Louis was in love: “I wish that you were ready to have me get that ring,” he wrote.³⁹⁷

Despite his father’s towering presence (Louis called him “Gov.”), and second thoughts, Louis slowly settled in and began to undertake projects that interested him, and these his father seems to have tolerated. There is no record of acrimony between father and son.

In all his correspondence, to his parents and to his future wife, Sally Good, Louis Church showed a real interest in horticultural topics.³⁹⁸ These were not related to the farm, which was a long-established, nearly autonomous operation headed by the farmer. As his parents aged, Louis continued the trend away from the farm, locating several activities, (such as the Greenhouse) to areas close to the House. Recreational facilities, used by Louis, his siblings and friends were also added. A “golf links” was laid out in an unknown arrangement, probably in the open park, in 1897,³⁹⁹ augmenting a tennis court built in the north meadow before 1890.⁴⁰⁰ While his father tolerated these additions (which had little impact on the land), there is no record that the elderly Frederic Church participated in these activities.

In 1893, William Donnelly, Church’s farmer for the previous twenty years, moved with his family from Cosy Cottage.⁴⁰¹ Late in 1894, Louis oversaw the installation of a

³⁹⁴ Letter: ICC to LPC, 3/23/1893 [DHA].

³⁹⁵ Letters: FEC to LPC, 3/27/1893, 4/7/1893 and 4/26/1893 [DHA].

³⁹⁶ Letter: LPC to SGC, 11/22/1894 [DHA].

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ See, for example: LPC to SGC, 5/5/1893 and 5/17/1893 [DHA].

³⁹⁹ Letter: ICB to LPC, 2/14/1897; and LPC to SGC, 5/10/1897 [DHA]. While open areas of the park are presumed to have been used for the golf links, the number of holes and the course layout are unknown.

⁴⁰⁰ Letter: LPC to SGC, 5/9/1890 [DHA]. In this letter Louis mentioned “our tennis court,” but its date of installation remains uncertain.

⁴⁰¹ Letter: LPC to ICC, 3/24/1893 [DHA].

new pump and piping system to bring water from the Lake to the House. The pump for this was housed in a pump house located near the Lake that may have been constructed as part of this work.⁴⁰² There was a covered saw mill (16 ft. square) constructed as a porch on the east side of this building (fig. 44).⁴⁰³ Water was stored in the cistern at the top of the hill.⁴⁰⁴ As in the past, staff changes were an ongoing event. Early in 1895 William McKenna died⁴⁰⁵ and a new man was hired in the spring described as “John, the new gardener.”⁴⁰⁶ Louis pitched in, with records showing that he ordered seeds both for 1895⁴⁰⁷ and 1896,⁴⁰⁸ and become, perhaps, a bit more active in the site’s operations.⁴⁰⁹ In the spring of 1896, a new gardener was hired, a Swede named “Augustus” who was “gilt edged,”⁴¹⁰ and “wouldn’t speak of a pansy except as Viola.”⁴¹¹

Louis Church’s interest in flowers extended to exotics of the sort that were never considered in his father’s landscape design palette. In this vein, it seems clear that the Greenhouse was built primarily in response to his interests. Louis advocated using exotics in the wider landscape. In 1894 he wrote to his mother then in the south: “If you hear of any palms and other tropical plants that can be had cheap it may be as well to buy them. They will look well as a border for the lawn and around the pond.”⁴¹² In 1896, a quantity of *Rhododendron*⁴¹³ and “90 rose bushes”⁴¹⁴ were ordered.⁴¹⁵ The *Rhododendrons* had problems,⁴¹⁶ but Louis persisted in trying them over several years. Roses seem to have been prominently planted in these years, in keeping with a theme then current in garden

⁴⁰² The name, “pump house,” is used for the purposes of this report. It is not known when this structure was built. It is not shown on the 1886 Plan of Olana but is shown on photographs dated to 1906 (fig. 40).

⁴⁰³ Memorandum: Joseph McEvoy, Arnold Cogswell to Paul R. Huey, archaeologist, BHS (hereafter cited as PRH), 8/29/1974 [BHS]. This is an archaeology report on the investigations that identified the foundation of this structure.

⁴⁰⁴ On this topic see, for example - letter: LPC to SGC, 11/24/1894 [DHA].

⁴⁰⁵ Catskill Examiner, 1/5/1895; and letter: LPC to ICC, not dated (c. 1/1894) [DHA].

⁴⁰⁶ Letter: LPC to ICC, 1/26/1895 [DHA].

⁴⁰⁷ Letter: LPC to ICC, 2/3/1895 [DHA].

⁴⁰⁸ Letter: LPC to ICC, 2/6/1896 [DHA].

⁴⁰⁹ Letter: ICC to ICB, 4/30/1896; and LPC to SGC, 11/25/1896 [DHA].

⁴¹⁰ Letter: LPC to ICC, 1/7/1896 [DHA].

⁴¹¹ Letter: LPC to ICC, 2/16/1896 [DHA].

⁴¹² Letter: LPC to ICC, 12/16/1894 [DHA].

⁴¹³ Receipt/letter: Meehan Nurseries to LPC, 4/16/1896 [DHA]. Also, letter: Shady Hill Nurseries to LPC, 4/15/1896 [DHA]. This note commented that “*Rhododendron maximum*” was in short supply, indicating that Louis Church had ordered it.

⁴¹⁴ LPC to SGC, 2/17/1896 [DHA]. These roses are detailed on a subsequent invoice: Mount Hope Nurseries to LPC, 4/10/1896 [DHA].

⁴¹⁵ Botanical Latin names are frequently the only way to identify plants accurately, common names being variable, both historically and geographically, and often misleading. The common names of certain species are so well-known that they are used here on occasion. Whenever it seems that confusion might arise, the botanical name has been included in this report.

⁴¹⁶ Letter: LPC to SGC, 5/17/1893 [DHA].

fashions. That same year, Louis ordered a variety of orchard and ornamental trees and perennials for the property.⁴¹⁷ His brother, Frederic Joseph, then living in Washington State, shipped shrubs and trees to Olana and these were planted, some on the East Lawn as shown in a later photograph.⁴¹⁸ Except for some of these evergreens from his brother, Louis Church's placement of these plants is not clear from the available documentation.

One prominent plant bed was the circular area at the center of the carriage turn-around. In one letter, Louis Church seems to refer to this as, "that good for nothing round bed where nothing will grow. Plant Clematis jackmani there and instead of giving them something to grow up on keep them on the ground and peg them down."⁴¹⁹ It is not known if this idea was ever implemented, but a photograph that may have been taken in this period shows the circular bed planted with an exotic mix of tropical annuals -- elephant ears and castor bean plants, etc.⁴²⁰ Inevitably, the planting of this bed may have changed periodically in these years, but Louis Church's comment that "nothing will grow" in the bed could be taken as circumstantial evidence that this was earlier a turf-surfaced plot, perhaps including a tree, as shown on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

While Louis Church's interest in horticulture seems to have had some impact close to the House it would be incorrect to suggest that Frederic Church was uninvolved, but over time he seems to have increasingly acquiesced to his son's interests and day-to-day decisions. The point remained that in these years Olana did not change in any substantial way.

In the spring of 1899, a large cow Barn was constructed, connected to the east side of the older Barn.⁴²¹ It would appear that a decision had been made to develop a dairy herd on the farm.⁴²² It is unlikely that 73 year old Frederic Church would have made this decision without Louis's involvement and, most importantly, adequate staff to maintain the

⁴¹⁷ Receipt: Mount Hope Nurseries to LPC, 4/10/1896 [DHA]. This order includes some unusual small trees, including Vine Maple (Acer circinatum), yellow-wood (Cladrastis lutea) and sweet-gum (Liquidambar styraciflua). Also, receipt: Pitcher & Manda Nursery to LPC, 3/12/1896 [DHA]. This order included perennial flowers, including Cosmos sulphureus, Iris kaempferi, Stachys lanata, Veronica and Calceolaria.

⁴¹⁸ Letter: FJC to LPC, 4/15/1896 [DHA]. There are several exotic evergreens that may have been added in this period, including Blue Spruce (Picea pungens), Carolina Hemlock (Tsuga caroliniana) and Japanese Black Pine (Pinus thunbergii), although none of these are native to the Pacific Northwest where Frederic Joseph Church was then living. A Carolina hemlock remains on the East Lawn.

⁴¹⁹ Letter: LPC to ICC, 2/16/1896 [DHA].

⁴²⁰ See photograph: OL.126.D5 (this accession number is outdated, but no new number has been assigned). The rustic railing is shown in the background, but this feature seems to have survived after Church's death, so that the exotic plantings may have come after Church's lifetime.

⁴²¹ Receipt: E. Lampman to FEC, 9/25/1899 [DHA]. The combined, L-shaped structure is referred to as the "Barn" for the purpose of this report.

⁴²² In recent years, it was concluded that the barn and dairy operation was a response to "more reliable railroad service in the valley." - memorandum: Albert R. Fromberger (hereafter cited as ARF) to Linda McLean (hereafter cited as LMcL), 6/24/1975 [BHS]. No evidence for this assertion is cited.

operations of a dairy farm. Curiously, specifics of the farm operations in this period are not well documented. By this date, William Donnelly had vacated the post of Olana farmer, but only the name of his replacement, "Peter VanOrshell," possibly misspelled, is known -- described a few months before Frederic Church's death as the "capable manager of artist Church's big farm below Hudson."⁴²³

While the farm evolved into a new enterprise, in May 1899, Isabel Church died in New York City. After a sad summer at Olana, Frederic Church went to Mexico in December. He returned in March 1900, in poor health, and died April 7, 1900 in New York City.⁴²⁴

⁴²³ [untitled notice], Coxsackie Union, 1/19/1900. A "Peter VanArsdale" is identified in two photographs taken by John Eberle at Olana in 1906 (see: OL.1987.731.14.a). It is not known if this was the "Peter VanOrshell" mentioned in the newspaper clipping.

⁴²⁴ Letter: LPC to SGC, 4/9/1900 [DHA].

SECTION III - DESIGN DESCRIPTION

I can picture you in your delightful surroundings with your charming friends amidst all that is beautiful in nature.

- Emma Carnes to her daughter, Isabel Church, c. 1870

The art of the landscape gardener has been employed, not so much to render Olana beautiful as to make it picturesque.

- Frank J. Bonnelle, Boston Sunday Herald, 9/7/1890

General Notes:

The Design Description presented in this section is based on the documentation compiled above in Section II - Property History During Church's Lifetime, as illuminated by the many photographs of the landscape, and on careful analysis of the existing site, which preserves (albeit often in remnant or altered form) the landscape created by Frederic Church. Documentation and physical evidence together allow the property to be described as it was before Frederic Church's death in 1900 (fig. 117).

In that year, Olana was a 250-acre estate extending over the north-south ridge line of the dominant hill. Steep west and moderately steep east- and southeast-facing slopes flank the ridge line. The high point is 495 feet above the Hudson River.⁴²⁵ As a landform, the Olana site resembles a long rounded cone. While the western slopes are precipitous, in places a true escarpment, only a small portion of Olana's total acreage is on the west side. The eastern slope -- far more varied -- constitutes a substantial portion of Olana. The northern part of the eastern slopes are nearly as steep as the western hillside. This area was the wooded setting of Olana's main entry road, the North Road. Adjacent to this, on the north side of the hill, the slope is hump-backed and rounded over the north meadow, which separated the steep west-facing slopes from the east-facing North Road corridor (fig. 49). In the southern area of Olana, the slopes extending down from the summit of the hill are more moderate and are reduced to level ground near the farm buildings, Kitchen Garden and Lake. These areas constitute a sheltered landform, one

⁴²⁵ Plan entitled: "Topographic Map - Olana State Historic Site," by O'Brien, Gere and Quinn, Surveyors, 3/15/1967 (scale: 1"=100', 2 foot contour interval) [NYSOPRHP, Taconic State Park Region] (fig. 115). This map indicates that the highest land elevation in Church's period was about 495 feet, being the top of a mound constructed for water storage (cistern) at the top of the hill. The Hudson River is approximately elevation 0. Subsequent elevations used in this report are taken from this survey.

writer called it an “interior landscape,⁴²⁶ screened from the Hudson River. Several hillocks, Crown Hill (elev. 350 ft.), Red Hill (elev. 359 ft.) and Quarry Hill (elev. 375 ft.), punctuate the rolling terrain.⁴²⁷

By the last decade of the 19th century, Frederic Church had substantially completed Olana as a unified designed landscape. By then, the House at the top of the hill was completed, with its adjacent Stable, service yards and lawns; reached by a circular final approach drive that dramatically presented the House and its setting. This final approach drive was reached by two entrance roads, leading from the south and north. The entrance roads were supplemented by an elaborate system of internal roadways that allowed access by carriage, farm vehicles or on foot to all areas of the property. The landscape character was highly varied, as will be described, but well-integrated, an effect achieved by melding the edges of one area with another, where the division between the mown house grounds, the meadow park, acres of cropland, orchards and pastures, and the rehabilitated woodlands merged into one place. Farm buildings, Barnyard and ploughed fields were isolated away from the purely ornamental landscape, subtly excluded from the primary views while vital elements of the total composition and critical to the property’s identity as a farm. Olana was a landscape of distinct areas melded into one, the epitome of variety within unity that is a leading principle of English landscape garden design.

While Olana was not developed at one moment, it was a consistent development and was based on an overall design plan believed to have been formulated and managed in Frederic Church’s mind from an early date -- most likely from his initial purchase of the Brezie farm in 1860, or shortly thereafter. As the years of development passed, the design evolved and Church recorded the process in correspondence over the years as an act of conscious design and planning, one that built on what had been accomplished before and that evolved as ideas and opportunities arose.⁴²⁸

Just as Church’s paintings have Old World antecedents, his Picturesque landscape gardening had its roots in England (see: Section I - Historical Background). But Olana was essentially of the New World, without association or reference to antiquity and seemingly indistinguishable from the boundless forest and pastoral farm landscape that was its 19th-century, Hudson Valley context. As attested to in Emma Carnes greetings to her daughter

⁴²⁶ “Hudson Revisited,” c. summer 1867 [VML].

⁴²⁷ By comparison, the Lake was at elev. 285 ft. and the lowest elevations were at the entrances, with the North Entrance at about elev. 230 ft. and the South Entrance at about elev. 210 ft. The lowest elevation on the property was at the drainage outflow along the eastern boundary of the farm, at elev. 201 ft.

⁴²⁸ One reporter (Bonnelle, 1890), described Church’s planning in setting out trees: “The multitude of trees, planted under Mr. Church’s direction a quarter century ago [i.e. 1865] now give convincing evidence of his wise foresight.”

Isabel Church, quoted at the start of this section, nature was the great attraction at rural Olana. Frederic Church's landscape gardening responded to this focus by utilizing the Picturesque design mode and its natural-appearing effects. As reported in the above quoted newspaper article, Olana was not designed to be "beautiful," if that word connoted an artificial, refined appearance. Instead, Olana was to be "picturesque," i.e., natural in appearance without pretensions. As one visitor reflected: "It is lovely here, real woodsy and wild,"⁴²⁹ while another exclaimed: "Well here I am! At last - looking at a perfect Eden of picturesque beauty."⁴³⁰ At Olana, Church induced a sense of repose and reverie for nature and country life, all within the modest artifice of a gentleman's farm. While there were no geometrical arrangements to make an overt statement of design, Olana is a fully man-made design artifact. Here, nature and art were joined imperceptibly, so that if documentation was not available it might be presumed that the Olana landscape was a haphazard composition, without a conscious design. For Church, as with many of his paintings, the celebration of nature and country life at Olana was achieved on local terms in a nearly pure rendition of the Picturesque design mode of landscape gardening, as defined by A. J. Downing, and championed by the English picturesque improvers of the late-18th century.

For Frederic Church, and for those who experienced the Olana landscape in his lifetime, its visual appeal was closely linked to religious and cultural understandings. It may be that our present-day sensibilities could find the mundane and tedious where the Churches and their contemporaries expressed profound adulation, but to test that hypothesis we must first be able to accurately understand the Olana landscape as a historic artifact, holistically and in its many details. As an artistic landscape, the product of Church's creativity, Olana displayed a multifaceted visual experience, myriad scene-making that changed to some extent over time. The nuances of Church's design work are difficult to document in all their details, but the principles employed are well-documented and were applied in a consistent way. There are no examples where Church directed landscape work at odds with a Picturesque approach and numerous examples where the details of Church's intention are readily understood as reflective of the Picturesque design mode defined by Downing (see: Section I - Historical Background).

The Design Description narrative documents these understandings by delineating the physical situation as it is thought to have been in the historic period before Church's death in 1900. The narrative uses the past tense (referenced to the period 1891-1900) and

⁴²⁹ Letter: Susan Hale to Miss Lucretia P. Hale, 6/29/1884, in Atkinson, p. 140.

⁴³⁰ Letter: Grace King [to Nan], 7/4/1891 [Collection of John Coxe, courtesy Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries].

as possible uses technical words and phrases that explicitly identify the landscape in its components and visual effects, within the limitations of the documentation and the remaining physical evidence. The narrative divides the property into several distinct areas and elements, as follows:

1. House environs
2. Lake and park
3. Bethune Road / South Road / New Approach Road
4. North Road
5. Ridge Road and Crown Hill Road
6. Farm

Later in this report (Section V), existing conditions are described using the same outline. In subsequent planning, restoration potential will also be discussed using this breakdown, so that the historic and existing conditions can be readily compared and evaluated. Understanding the historic design provides the critical basis for determining the integrity of the historic landscape, its correct interpretation, and the selection of appropriate preservation treatments.

The design description is illustrated on the Reconstruction Plan, 1891-1900 (figs. 117 and 118).

1. House Environs

While the dominant hill was of modest height, its 1:2 western slope produced an overlook toward the river and Catskill Mountains to the west. The western slope was especially steep near the House, accentuating the effect. The House was sited so that it cut through the dominant ridge line. The western wing of the House was dramatically perched above the escarpment, even while the entrance door on the east and the ombra on the south exited directly onto generous open ground.⁴³¹ One reporter said: “It is founded upon a rock.”⁴³² The House itself was the jewel of Olana’s landscape setting (fig. 19). It was exotic, an artist’s house, without the gesture to regional design themes (e.g., Downing and Vaux’s Hudson River Bracketed style) that would have resulted in a more vernacular edifice.⁴³³ Church himself admitted the House was, “a curiosity in Architecture,”⁴³⁴ indicating his intent. He said: “It is Persian in style.”⁴³⁵ Recently, a scholar described: “glittering points, a delirium of exotic effects, [the House] was the architectural embodiment of the flamboyance with which Church often approached landscape [painting] in both North and South America.”⁴³⁶ One 19th-century writer described it more modestly and with a hint of the building’s innovation: “. . . a bright open eyed house, presenting on the landscape side [i.e., the lawn terraces] an almost unbroken expanse of plate-glass window . . . It is certainly no rectangle of dead walls.”⁴³⁷

Each of the primary windows in the House was studied to frame a view. While the House was under construction, Church asserted that, “the picture from each window will be really marvellous,”⁴³⁸ acknowledging that he had consciously considered these views as

⁴³¹ The ground lines around the House may have evolved over time. A Vaux drawing (fig. 18) shows the House with the grade on the south facade held below the basement elevation. As built, the finish grade is artificially formed into terraces giving direct at-grade access to the veranda and ombra. Despite Vaux’s sketch (which also shows architectural elements and forms not included in the final structure) no doubt internal arrangements in the House, and Church’s desire to have ready access onto the site from his primary first-floor rooms, inspired the change.

⁴³² Bonnelle.

⁴³³ One scholar, Peter L. Goss, “An Investigation of Olana,” unpublished PhD diss., Ohio University, 1973, p. 119, criticized the architecture in these terms, saying: “It is the intricate decorative features of the house that prevent it from being in complete harmony with the site and landscape.”

⁴³⁴ Letter: FEC to WHO, 7/22/1871 [Princeton University Library]. A. J. Downing, in his book, *Landscape Gardening*, said a Persian style house was, “rich in fanciful decoration and picturesque in its detail,” but goes on to say that this style has, “comparatively few charms of association for residents of this country” (4th ed., 1849), p. 380.

⁴³⁵ Letter: FEC to Amelia Edwards, 9/2/1877 [Somerville College Library, Oxford, England].

⁴³⁶ Novak, p. 27.

⁴³⁷ Zabriskie.

⁴³⁸ Letter: FEC to WHO, 7/22/1871 [DHA].

he designed the House. As one visitor described it: “You look through vistas to shining oak boughs, and dim, blue hills far beyond, middle distance omitted because so far below.”⁴³⁹ A 19th-century writer concluded that the House, “commands so many views of varied character and beauty, that here may be almost said to culminate the glories of the Hudson.”⁴⁴⁰ Church described the view as linking Olana to a wider world:

. . . of the mountains, rolling and savannah country, villages, forests and clearings. The noble River expands to a width of over two miles forming a lake-like sheet of water which is always dotted with steamers and other craft.⁴⁴¹

Important to the view was the “lake-like sheet of water,” being Inbocht Bay (“The Ernboucht”) five miles south of Olana (figs. 14, 15 and 16). Here the river widened considerably and the lake-like expanse, seen in the distant view, gave an expansive focus to the scene. Just beyond this wide bay the river turned out of view. This point Church called “the bend in the river.”⁴⁴²

In keeping with the subtle artistry of the House siting, the structure was not placed at the highest elevation, but set into the south ridge of the hill so that there was a depth of wooded backdrop and higher ground to frame the dwelling (fig. 19) and shelter it from at least some of the worst of the prevailing winter winds. One reporter noted this effect, describing the view looking up from the river where the House was seen “with the green foliage surrounding it.”⁴⁴³ The siting off the summit also coincided with a wider area of ground, allowing space adjacent to the House for the final approach drive and the East Lawn. The ground south of the House was artificial, formed into narrow, stepped lawn terraces that fronted the ombra and provided at-grade access onto the piazza (veranda) that extended further to the west, cantilevered over the steep slope.⁴⁴⁴ Later, the studio wing anchored the western end of the House more firmly to the ground on this side, forming an outer tower (figs. 24 and 25). There was an open view to the west from a half-round porch on the end of the studio wing and toward the south from the piazza. Trees were periodically pruned, thinned or felled to maintain the prospect.

⁴³⁹ Letter: Susan Hale to Miss Lucretia P. Hale, 6/29/1884, in Atkinson, p. 140.

⁴⁴⁰ “Homes of America V” (1876).

⁴⁴¹ Letter: FEC to Amelia Edwards, 9/2/1877 [Somerville College Library, Oxford, England].

⁴⁴² Zabriskie; also, see: Kelly et al., p. 131. Zabriskie (1884) described “the Boght, (or Bend).” The term “bend in the river” was also used to inscribe various sketches that show this view.

⁴⁴³ Bonnelle.

⁴⁴⁴ For a detailed discussion of the entrance porch, ombra and piazza, see: Karen Zukowski, “Olana Furnishings Plan, Exterior Rooms,” 1996 (draft) [OSHS].

The panoramic views become ever more striking seen from the lawn terraces. The stepped lawn terraces provided a substantial platform for the House, giving it what one scholar has called “groundedness.”⁴⁴⁵ The lawn terrace closest to the House served as a refined outdoor sitting area from which to enjoy the southern exposure and the views. The surface (about 900 sq. ft.) was short-cropped, uniform turf, a refined and carefully maintained surface suitable for setting out chairs and sitting in fine weather.⁴⁴⁶ The piazza and ombra provided shady recesses on hot sunny days. While the situation would have varied over time, potted plants may have embellished the stone terraces and steps of the ombra and the piazza on the south side of the House, although none are shown on photographs that survive. While Church may have installed a seasonal display of flowers close to the House, there is no evidence that flower beds were habitually maintained. None were mentioned in the documentation, nor are any bedded flowers illustrated in photographs that survive.

West of the lawn terraces the ground dropped abruptly along the House foundation so that the basement level was accessible below the piazza, which was supported on individual piers. The studio wing reached the edge of the cliff-like slope and was supported by a massive stone wall that curved around the western end of the House. So precipitous was the ground here that no convenient access was possible. This situation isolated the service area (north of the House) from the south lawn terraces where family life was focused.

Various vines, clinging by root hold-fasts, were trained on the walls of the House. As shown in photographs, the pattern of this vine coverage seems to have changed a bit over the years (figs. 27 and 28). House vines seem to have included, but perhaps not limited to, Boston ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*),⁴⁴⁷ and Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*).⁴⁴⁸

The lawn terraces and the East Lawn, described below, were the most refined turf surfaces at Olana, contrasting with the meadow in surrounding areas of the park (see below). By the end of the historic period, it appears that the lawn surfaces were maintained using a reel-type mowing machine. While the earliest use of such a mower at Olana is

⁴⁴⁵ David Seamon, “Recommendations for a Visitors’ Center at Frederic Church’s Olana, Based on the Approach of Christopher Alexander’s Pattern Language,” unpublished report, Kansas State University, January, 1989, p. 72.

⁴⁴⁶ OL.1982.1330 shows this use.

⁴⁴⁷ Ivy is shown on several photographs, e.g. OL.1987.288 and OL.1987.156.

⁴⁴⁸ Zabriskie.

unknown, a “lawn mower” was sent out for repairs in the summer of 1884⁴⁴⁹ confirming that one was in use at this date.

The East Lawn was framed (and so defined) by the final approach drive. In 1890, this was called “a fine semi-circular driveway.”⁴⁵⁰ The Lawn was a diminutive clearing that served as the immediate setting of the House (fig. 27). It was framed by mature woodland and was roughly circular in shape. Along the east facade of the House, edging the driveway, the grade dropped abruptly forming a terrace-like platform opposite the entrance porch. From the base of this terrace, the lawn sloped gently toward the east away from the House. The 1886 Plan of Olana showed the extent of lawn surface and indicated that the open ground was spotted with several trees. Many of these were native chestnut oaks (*Quercus prinus*) already on the site before house construction. The age and stature of these trees complemented the House and helped to integrate the architecture into the setting, a central principle of Picturesque siting.

Except on its northern edge, where shrubbery hid the service area and Stable yard, and along the final approach drive on the southeast (see below), there is no indication that shrubs were planted on the East Lawn, as these would have screened eye-level and carriage views toward the House, at this point the intended focus. The final approach drive to the House traced the edge of the East Lawn completing the elaborate serial visual experience of the entrance roads. As mentioned above, understory vegetation and wooded ground was retained to screen the House service area and Stable yard. This was especially critical for those entering along the North Road, which came quite close to these utilitarian areas. As intended, the House was (as one reporter described it), “hardly seen till you are directly upon it.”⁴⁵¹ After turning away from the Stable yard and service area, the North Road came to the intersection of the New Approach Road, which was used as the south approach after it was constructed in about 1888. As intended by Church, the first full, close-up view of the House was at the intersection of the New Approach Road, so that the east entrance side of the House was seen from the same point in the arrival sequence no matter which entrance road had been followed. From this intersection, the final approach drive rose slowly in elevation and extended out to the south supported by a substantial retaining wall. Then the driveway curved back toward the northwest, where the House was strikingly presented in an oblique view showing the two primary facades (fig. 28). Views to the south from the final approach drive introduced the park and valley prospects that would be

⁴⁴⁹ Bill: William Tough (Agricultural Implements) to FEC, 8/11/1884 [DHA].

⁴⁵⁰ Bonnelle.

⁴⁵¹ Zabriskie.

most strikingly seen from the lawn terraces south of the House.⁴⁵² The retaining wall that edged the final approach drive was an important design element. It created a belvedere effect on the south before the driveway returned to grade just before it arrived at the entrance porch of the House.

The drama of arriving at the House was further enhanced by the grading of the East Lawn. On reaching the driveway in this area, the lawn surface dipped down into a hollow beside the road. This may have been done to facilitate drainage, or to protect a tree that may have existed there. It also had the effect of setting the approach driveway off visually at the point where it was protruding out into space. Later, when the New Approach Road was constructed below the retaining wall, it may be that this hollow began to be planted with shrubs and trees. While there is no definitive record of when these plantings were installed,⁴⁵³ it is possible that they were to serve as a backdrop, so that the House was screened for those coming up the New Approach Road at the point where they viewed the mingled garden (see below).⁴⁵⁴

North of the House was a carriage turn-around, approximately 50 feet in diameter with a center island. The turn-around was supported by a retaining wall on the north. This was topped with a rustic railing constructed of twisted stems of mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) (fig. 30).⁴⁵⁵ The 1886 Plan of Olana showed the open center of the turn-around and indicates, by a tree symbol and light green coloring, a lawn surface with one tree. There is no photographic evidence to confirm this. Late in Church's lifetime ornamental annuals (possibly including exotics) may have been installed in the circle bed during the period when Louis Church was supervising plantings close to the house.⁴⁵⁶ But again, photographs showing this treatment are thought to date after 1900. Below the turn-around wall, on the shady north side, was a fern garden (fig. 30).

North of the House service area was a cistern, shown on the 1886 Plan of Olana and in photographs (fig. 29). North from there was the Stable (fig. 24) with the small attached coachman's dwelling on the north. On the east side of the Stable there was a wood plank floor installed as an apron where the building was entered.⁴⁵⁷ Elsewhere, in

⁴⁵² OL.1987.72. This important photograph, dated to the period 1885-95, shows the south view from the final approach drive.

⁴⁵³ The earliest evidence of these plantings is from oral recollections - interview notes: Mrs Vera Dietz by ?, 9/10/1971 [OSHS].

⁴⁵⁴ It would have been a distraction to have seen the truncated House over the wall when trying to focus on the mingled garden. This effect likely inspired the mitigating measures of planting the top of the wall.

⁴⁵⁵ This railing apparently remained into the 1910s - interview notes: Mrs. Vera Dietz by Richard Slavin (hereafter cited as RS), 9/10/1971 [OSHS].

⁴⁵⁶ EMcL, "Landscape Research Report," 1986, pp. 25-28; also, see: OL.1987.36.

⁴⁵⁷ OL.1986.59.13.

the Stable yard and in the service area north of the House, the driveway was brought to the building walls, forming utilitarian spaces that were isolated away from the more ornamental west and south facades. The surface of the driveway, service area and Stable yard was shale, extracted from Red Hill. The shale, shown in several photographs (figs. 24, 32 and 33) seems to have been more finely raked and carefully maintained close to the House, with less refinement away from this area.⁴⁵⁸

Woodland areas that enveloped the Stable and House were kept natural and dense with understory vegetation (fig. 29). The intent was that visitors approaching the House would not see the service area or Stable yard. The wooded ground was preserved and enhanced to maintain a dense screen. From the available evidence, woody plants (trees and shrubs) around the House were restricted to varieties indigenous to the northeast USA. Plants native to the site dominated. The chestnut oaks were mature trees on the hilltop, with some red oak (*Quercus rubra*) and sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) in significant numbers. Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), eastern hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), Canada hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), pignut hickory (*Carya glabra*) and white oak (*Quercus alba*) were also present but usually individually, scattered and in fewer overall numbers. Understory shrubs and small trees included staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), witchhazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), American elder (*Sambucus canadensis*), common hoptree (*Ptelea trifoliata*), American bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*) and several others.

North of the Stable, at the highest elevation of the hill -- artificially raised on a mound -- Church built a cistern that supplied water to the House. Later, at an unknown date, a water tower was added there. This area also seems to have been used as a handy, screened service/utility area (nothing looked down onto it). A small garden may have been located to provide some cut flowers for the House.⁴⁵⁹ Over time, there was a woodshed and a small garage (carriage shed ?) in the area. These appear in photographs taken in the 1930s, so that the arrangement and components maintained in Church's lifetime are unclear. No definitive documentation is available for this area at the end of Church's lifetime. On the north side of the summit was one of the property's features, the North View, a spot that looked out across the north meadow toward Mt. Merino, the North Entrance and the City of Hudson and was easily accessible from the House. While a seat

⁴⁵⁸ The iron content of the local shale gave a warm reddish tone to soil and roads surfaced with this shale, so that the soil had a role in furthering the ornamental goals.

⁴⁵⁹ EC, diary entry, 5/16/1882 [DHA]. "Gardener putting out plants in bed in rear of house top of hill." While inconclusive, this plant bed may have been at the highest elevation of the hill where it would have been screened from House views. If so, this may have been a utilitarian cutting garden.

might well have been located there, no photograph survives showing the North View as Church knew it.

Below the House, on the eastern slope, was the Greenhouse with attached potting shed and nearby pump (figs. 31 and 92).⁴⁶⁰ The Greenhouse was a small (approximately 15 ft. x 30 ft.) utilitarian structure, hidden in woodland beside a section of the original South Road -- late in the 19th century, largely out of view after the construction of the New Approach Road.

As noted above, several roads extended outward from the House grounds, including the New Approach Road, the North Road and older portions of the South Road that had been bypassed with the construction of the New Approach Road. After about 1888, the South Road led uphill on the New Approach Road. These important roads are discussed separately below.

2. Lake and park

From the early years of his development, Frederic Church made a major land-use change when he reserved former agricultural acreage for his Lake and park. These reservations amounted to the entire western half of the original 126-acre farm and prefigured construction of the House and the property's eventual landscape garden composition.

In the area surrounding the Lake, Church restricted agricultural use in the entire southwest quadrant of Olana -- a total of about 31 acres. This area is not shown in early illustrations and there is little direct record of its management and development by Church. Still, the evidence on site is clear. Much of the area outside the wetland (future Lake) was potentially valuable agricultural land and can be presumed to have been largely open ground at the time of Church's purchase of the Brezie farm (fig. 14). A survey of the existing conditions suggests that much of this was allowed to return quickly to woodland in Church's ownership, a situation attested to by the 1886 Plan of Olana. Later photographs of the Lake show the maturing effect of growth over several decades.⁴⁶¹

Within this woodland setting, the Lake (about ten acres of water surface)⁴⁶² was excavated over a nearly 20 year period. The outline of the Lake was determined fundamentally by the topography. The natural basin that was the site of the Lake had

⁴⁶⁰ See also photograph OL.1987.131.38.a. This shows the Greenhouse from the south.

⁴⁶¹ For example: OL.1987.131.10.a; and OL.1987.131.8.a.

⁴⁶² Based on the 1967 survey (fig. 115).

moderately steep sides all around, so that it fit closely into the landform, except at the northeast corner at the site of the dam. Otherwise, only a slight embankment was needed for a short section about half-way down the eastern shoreline. All around, the Lake was framed by the wooded ground that Church reserved as the Lake setting. In its final configuration, the Lake could not have been made larger, or significantly reshaped.⁴⁶³

The woodland frame around the Lake extended to high points along the west, south and eastern side. While the depth of this woodland was thin on the east, the wooded topography was effective at separating the Lake from the farm fields. This was also the situation on the western side of the Lake, where the South Road and the public highway were fully screened from views by the topography and the Lake's wooded environs. The wooded ground was extended to the boundary of the property on the south. The Red Hill lot, purchased in 1877, had not had time to grow into wooded ground, and so was shown as largely open on the 1886 Plan of Olana. Except at the South Entrance, observations in the existing woods suggest that most of this area had been allowed to return to woodland before Church's death.

The Lake road was a portion of the interconnected road that bordered the shoreline; other segments being portions of the South Road and the lower Farm Road. The Lake road was ingeniously fitted to the landforms and provided numerous views out to the water and beyond.⁴⁶⁴ On the east side of the Lake, the road was at one point dramatically oriented on line with the House. A dry-laid, stone retaining wall was constructed to fit the alignment between the water and a rocky high point. Periodically, the Lake was stocked with fish. By the end of Church's lifetime it seems to have been the habitat of bullheads, carp, catfish and large eels.⁴⁶⁵ The Lake was fitted out with a boat and was also used by the farm ducks and geese.⁴⁶⁶

Church reserved the entire northwest quadrant of the farm (a total of about 31 acres) for parkland. The development of this area occurred slowly and the ground seems to have remained in active agriculture for a time before its importance evolved after House construction on the hilltop north of this area. Even then the area was hayed, but with the House in place, the park played an important ornamental role as it combined with the Lake

⁴⁶³ Several scholars have suggested that the shape of the Lake was selected by Church to reflect Inbocht Bay, the wide portion of the Hudson River located south of Olana. Seamon (1989, p. 98) says that the Lake was "artificially made to echo visually the bend in the river [i.e., Inbocht Bay]." In fact, Church had limited options for both the location or shape of the Lake. Its relationship to the Hudson is largely a coincidence.

⁴⁶⁴ OL.1986.59.3.

⁴⁶⁵ Dietz Interview, June 1985 [OSHS].

⁴⁶⁶ Many photographs show the Lake and its appurtenances, e.g. OL.1987.131.9.a.

to form the foreground for prospects seen from the House and lawn terraces. One visitor described Olana in 1889 as “a park and a farm,”⁴⁶⁷ seeing the two as distinct.

Although seemingly natural in appearance, the park was a complex design carefully planned, constructed and planted by Frederic Church over a thirty-year period. It was bounded on the south by the Lake, on the west by the edge of woods that extended from the Lake to the House along the crest of the dominant ridge line. The north boundary was the House environs, edged by the lawn terraces and the retaining wall that formed a belvedere along the final approach drive. The east boundary of the park was the edge of woods that descended from the hilltop to the lower Farm Road that separated the parkland from agricultural fields to the east. The park was in this way enclosed -- set off from its surroundings and given a separate identity.

The park area was open ground when purchased. From the first, Church planted thousands of trees, individually and in groups. After the first few years he did not use the open ground for row crops or grazing (fig. 35). Church altered the edges of the area to establish the spatial boundaries of the park. Church built several roads through the park and these road layouts, discussed separately below, were crucial because they directed movement through the park and so determined the visual experience. Features were included: Church’s Studio (fig. 21) was erected in the area but was removed in the late 1880s and was not a component of the historic landscape late in Church’s residence. A small structure, labeled a “Summer House” on the 1886 Plan of Olana, was located on an exposed knoll, 350 feet south of the House. There is no other documentation or photographs showing this feature. As Church is known to have introduced rustic-styled benches to the property (fig. 52), it would be consistent to have had the Summer House and other seats on the property in the rustic style, but given the current lack of documentation even this conclusion is somewhat speculative. Finally, completing the inventory of structures related to the park, mention is made of two small foundations identified in archaeological reports,⁴⁶⁸ and shown as small rectangular shapes on the 1886 Plan of Olana. These were located about halfway up the slope on the southern side of the park. Unlike other buildings, the foundations are not rendered with a red tone and this may indicate that they were foundations in 1886.

Despite these few buildings, the park was largely a complex organic spatial composition relying for its design on the management of trees. As noted above, the open meadow was bounded on its perimeter by a woodland edge, whose position and visual

⁴⁶⁷ Kate Bradbury (companion to Amelia Edwards), 12/25/1889 [from a typescript extract in the possession of Brenda E. Moon, Edinburgh, Scotland].

⁴⁶⁸ Roenke and Matejka, “Archaeology Report,” July, 1979, p. 11 [BHS].

character defined the park's sense-of-place, and often formed the foreground for views outward (figs. 15 and 16). The 1886 Plan of Olana is of singular importance in documenting the historic situation, at least in terms of the position of the wooded edge. While the 1886 Plan is not an accurate measured plan that can be directly related to a modern survey, its accuracy is apparent on the ground because the road layout has survived and these alignments serve as adequate references to locate other elements. Importantly, the 1886 Plan shows the tree pattern and gives a sense of the surface character by using shaded color tones. Wooded areas are shown distinct from open meadow. The 1886 Plan can also be cross referenced to photographs that confirm the delineation of open versus wooded areas allowing an accurate plotting. In this way, the wooded edge as it existed close to the end of the historic period can be determined with a high degree of accuracy.

Tracing the edge of the open space, beginning at the House and moving clockwise around the park (fig. 22a), the 1886 Plan shows a treed area against the retaining wall near the site of the mingled garden, which at that date had yet to be installed. From this point, the wooded ground extended down the slope in a curving alignment to the original South Road, with woodland to the north along what would have been the boundary of the original Brezie farm. Changes occurred here after 1886. First, selected trees and understory vegetation were removed in this area to accommodate the New Approach Road, and to allow the mingled garden to be laid out with an open, sunny exposure against the retaining wall. Later, some additional trees seem to have been cleared to allow construction of the Greenhouse located north of this area. This selected clearing may have been contrasted with new plantings to screen undesirable views (as to the Greenhouse). In this event, open parkland was defined along a curving edge extending down the slope from the mingled garden to the lower Farm Road. The tree canopy enveloped the older portions of the South Road, crossing north of the site of Church's Studio (where the New Approach Road turned from the earlier route of the South Road) and filled the narrow piece of ground between the South Road and the uphill Farm Road. After bordering a section of the east side of this Farm Road, the line of woods continued downhill to the lower Farm Road which formed the east boundary of the park. The lower Farm Road was edged on its west side with irregularly spaced groves of trees that collectively helped separate the park from the agricultural fields to the east and southeast (fig. 30). These plantings are shown on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

Except for a few small clearings that allowed direct access to the Lake shore, the narrow strip along the northern Lake edge, between the lower Farm Road and the water,

was wooded.⁴⁶⁹ This wooded belt served as a subtle separation of the park from the Lake. After crossing the northern end of the Lake, on the lower Farm Road, the tree canopy crossed over that road and filled the narrow, steep piece of ground between the lower Farm Road and the South Road. This terminated the open park ground at its southwest corner, as is clearly shown on the 1886 Plan of Olana. Along the ridge line, the wooded edge continued on the western side of the South Road except in one area where the road curved out into the open park for a short distance. Moving up the slope, the 1886 Plan shows woodland vegetation extending beyond the distinctive intersection of the Bethune Road / Ridge Road and continuing along the north side of the South Road for a distance of several hundred feet. There it broke off and continued along the west side of the New Approach Road as it followed uphill toward the House, completing the circumference of the park.

The wooded ground in the important area just below the House and lawn terraces changed late in Church's lifetime. Initially, with the woodland less mature, the scene was quite exposed, giving the effect of the House perched above a precipice (fig. 19). As the woodland grew, the perch-like effect of the House was diluted somewhat, but the open meadow below the lawn terraces remained generally unplanted. The 1886 Plan shows a few scattered trees there. This situation seems to have changed after 1886, perhaps in conjunction with the installation of the New Approach Road. At this point, Church seems to have added plantings designed to limit direct views to the House from the New Approach Road. White pines (*Pinus strobus*), hemlocks and some deciduous trees and shrubs were included in a thicket, well-illustrated in photographs (fig. 24). These plantings suggest that Church wished to extend the woodland out into former open areas. Over time, this planting would have been effective at screening direct views to the House for those entering the property on the New Approach Road. At maturity, these plantings might also have grown to intrude on valued distant views from the House. Church could have managed this with selected thinning, but the situation had not matured prior to his death.

In several areas, as in the above example, the nuances of Church's intended Picturesque effect are difficult to detect or fully understand from the photographs and written records that remain. In managing spatial definition and composing views, while screening detractors, Church worked with the organic elements of the landscape. His response (typical of the entire property) is thought to have been flexible, working within the limits of the situation and consistently within what we can today define as Picturesque design principles applied to his overall scheme for the property. The woodland areas of

⁴⁶⁹ OL.1987.131.3.a.

Olana were not maintained by Church in a rigid way, allowing only selected species of plants, but instead as an organic composition that was initially preserved, and enhanced and then managed to varying extents for an intended appearance. The specifics of how Church evaluated the ephemeral aspects of landscape design are important, but limited evidence is sometimes all that is available in reconstructing the intended effect. The treatment of Quarry Hill is a case in point. Located at the western edge of the park, Quarry Hill was a prominent foreground feature in the outward views. Initially, Quarry Hill was quite exposed (figs. 14 and 15), but later wooded ground seems to have been allowed to encroach around the summit and this would have tended to mask the hill's earlier dramatic outline. There are no suitable views of the hill late in Church's lifetime, so that its appearance at that date is uncertain.

Within the park, Frederic Church deliberately planted the former open landscape with small trees in a scheme that changed to some extent over time. The initial and subsequent tree plantings were encouraged to grow into a mature effect. The pattern of Church's park plantings is documented on the 1886 Plan and illustrated in many photographs (figs. 34 and 35). The park plantings can be described and their pattern reconstructed (fig. 117). In 1890, a newspaper article summarized Church's activities in planting trees in the park by quoting him saying: "For several seasons after I selected this spot as my home, I thought of hardly anything but planting trees, and had thousands and thousands of them set out on the southern and western slopes."⁴⁷⁰ The complex pattern of tree placement in the park contributed to the particular visual character there, enlivening the open areas, imparting spatial definition and ornamentation to what would otherwise be a mundane hay field.

According to the 1886 Plan of Olana, there were at least three ways in which trees were arranged in the park. First were thickets, i.e., clumps of trees and understory vegetation. These were islands of woodland floating in the otherwise open meadow. In some cases these insular areas were associated with exposed rock where field mowing would have been difficult. Secondly, there were arranged groups of trees, along roads or in groves, planted without understory but with open meadow running between the individual trees. As they grew older, these trees grew together giving a massed appearance, so that the trees were not intended as specimens. Finally, there were single trees, sometimes planted close to each other, but not intended to be seen as massed or as groups so much as individual specimens.

⁴⁷⁰ Bonnelle.

In several situations, trees forming thickets were maintained in the open meadow. A half dozen of these thickets seem to be shown on the 1886 Plan of Olana. Some of these may be misrepresented due to the uncertainty with the plan's accuracy.⁴⁷¹ One thicket that can be definitively identified is an oval-shaped stand of trees and shrubs covering an exposed area of rock in the southwest corner of the park. Another dense thicket is shown on the 1886 Plan occupying a rocky spur near the center of the park, while yet another is shown on the north side of the lower Farm Road opposite the Lake. The existence of these groups is not always corroborated by photographs. Extant remnants do not provide definitive evidence except in some areas.

In general, trees in open groves seem to have been developed on the upper slopes of the park, along the South Road and also below the House and retaining wall, downhill to the site of Church's Studio. In addition, more densely planted groves, perhaps intended ultimately as thickets, were developed along the edge of the park, as for example north of Cosy Cottage and along the lower Farm Road. This last example has been noted earlier under the discussion of the park's wooded edges. Dense groups of trees were also prevalent on the steep slope between the lower and the uphill Farm Roads. These more heavily planted areas would have served to screen areas outside the park -- the farm buildings for example -- as well as provide a depth of planting and a three-dimensional transition along the perimeter of the park. Again, the historic effect could have changed over time with Church managing the effect as best he could in the circumstances of the moment, but the situation in 1886 is well-illustrated on the 1886 Plan.

Specimen trees were also included in Church's park plantings. These individually placed trees were used as transitions from groves and wooded edges or thickets out into the more open ground. In lower areas toward the Lake and in the center of the park, the meadow was more open, studded with more widely-spaced specimens, intended as culminating features of the parkland.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷¹ Some of the uncertainty regarding the park plantings results from the inaccuracies of Frederic Joseph Church's depiction of trees in this area. In turn, except where photographs can be interpreted, the 1886 Plan is often the only source of documentation for these plantings. On the 1886 Plan, the cartographic difference between open groves of trees and woodland thickets was a color wash of dark green. The use of the dark-green tone in some areas is unclear. It may be that this tone represents dense groves that had matured in twenty years into near or true thickets, with mowing precluded and selected shrubbery and tree saplings allowed to remain between trees. It could also be that Frederic Joseph Church was simply highlighting graphically an entire grove of trees, but that in reality the meadow surface continued through the tree stand, with the ground not taken up with understory vegetation.

⁴⁷² A close study of the 1886 Plan shows that in depicting individual trees some of Frederic Joseph Church's representations are highly accurate, attested to by the present conditions. For example, the cottage driveway (from the five-points road intersection near the Lake to Cosy Cottage) is shown on the 1886 Plan lined with about eighteen regularly-spaced trees. The Existing Conditions Plan (fig. 116), based on present day remnants of this planting, confirms that the 1886 depiction is close to accurate. In contrast, the 1886

Types of trees used in the park and their precise individual positioning in the design scheme are difficult and elusive questions to answer. In considering these issues, it must be remembered that the specifics of any one tree is much a secondary concern as related to the overall pattern of vegetation described above. In the park, Church generally utilized what may be called “forest trees.” With some exceptions, exotics (that is trees foreign to the native woodland) were not used because in his design Church was not interested in a botanical collection or visual contrasts, but in new plantings that would integrate with the indigenous scene. His intention was to appear natural and using native material was intrinsic to that end.

The 1886 Plan of Olana, critical to establishing the layout of the park plantings, is of limited use in determining the types of trees used in the park. Instead, even undated photographs can be very informative if they show trees that were clearly present in the historic period. Given the longevity of trees, this is often the case. The difference between evergreen and deciduous trees is also readily apparent in photographs. So, for example, there seems to have been few evergreens planted in the open areas of the park, although numerous evergreens were included in the woodland and in groves along the park edges, especially in the northeast corner.⁴⁷³

As noted earlier, sugar maples were used to line the approach drive to Cosy Cottage and maples seem to have been a dominant species in groves and thickets, especially on the upper slopes. Numerous maples were set out in the area between the South Road and the House grounds and these were mixed within their natural association of beech and birch. The white birch (Betula papyrifera) of these open slopes became a feature of the upper park even before the development of the New Approach Road, when it seems to have been augmented with new plantings that further enhanced the effect. After construction of the new road, white birch may have been added, more or less aligned along the road edges, but in an irregular way. These trees with their arching white branches dominate many photographs (fig. 33).⁴⁷⁴ Along the northern fringe of the park, pines and firs seem to have also been included, but kept to the edges and only sparingly in the open park. Several are seen on the steep slope immediately south of the House, and also along the eastern flank of the hillside. From the photographic evidence, American elms (Ulmus americana)

Plan can be highly inaccurate. For example, the open grove of maple trees at the southwest corner of the park included a dozen or more old trees. Many still remain today, but only six are shown on the 1886 Plan. Some of these areas are also seen in photographs, and as noted about the existing conditions, these photographs provide vital corroborating evidence. From the variety of documentation available, a reasonably accurate reconstruction of the tree pattern in the park is possible (fig. 117).

⁴⁷³ OL.1987.132.26.i; OL.1987.132.26.h; and OL.1987.132.26.b.

⁴⁷⁴ Also, for example: OL.1986.59.23; OL.1987.82; OL.1987.69; and OL.1987.45.

appear to have been planted singly (fig. 34).⁴⁷⁵ This would be in keeping with the favorable opinion these trees enjoyed as specimens, prized for their vase-like shape when standing alone. Still, elms were native trees so that even in this case, exotic trees were avoided.

No grazing or other overt agricultural activity was permitted in the park. From the start, muck excavated from the Lake was spread on the open ground to enrich the shallow natural topsoil; the surface was grass, hayed as an agricultural crop. While ideally dominated by grass species suitable for fodder, the meadow is not thought to have been homogeneous. In several letters, Church indicated that a portion of the park had been hayed, ploughed and re-seeded, presumably to renew the hay crop. Timothy and clover appear on Olana bills and these popular seed types may have been used to re-seed areas in order to improve the quality of the hay (fig. 35), although this activity may not have been restricted to the park.

The mingled garden was located along the south side of the retaining wall that edged the final approach driveway. The garden amounted to a long border to be seen primarily from the New Approach Road as it passed by on the south, at a slightly lower elevation (fig. 32). There was also a path through the garden which was easily accessible from the House.⁴⁷⁶ A low (about three or four foot) wire fence was installed around the garden. The garden was a mixed planting of perennials, possibly some woody shrubs, and annuals. The billings for perennial plants that appear to have been used in the initial planting of this garden included genus names only. Many of these plant types have numerous varieties, but since these are not identified, it is not possible to identify the exact names of the individual plants used, or their flower color -- both important considerations in attempting to reconstruct the design layout as it might have been in Church's lifetime. This said, the following plants are included on the bill receipts that are believed related to the mingled garden (see: Section II - Property History During Church's Lifetime): pansies, chrysanthemum, sweet alyssum, calceolaria, centauria, calendula, heliotrope, vinca, coleus, echeveria, salvia, aster, anthemis, lobelia, begonia, geranium and rose geranium, verbena and lantana. Vines, grown on unspecified support trellises attached to the stone retaining wall and on the wire fence that enclosed the garden, included cobeia, maurandia, nasturtium and clematis. There were several roses and peonys in the beds when it was restored in the 1970s, but these could date to a period after Church's death. As in any garden bed, it can be presumed some plants did well and others poorly, and

⁴⁷⁵ See: OL.1987.282.

⁴⁷⁶ OL.1987.131.19.a.

when some died others were added. There is no evidence that a conscious or consistent color scheme was worked out or maintained, but it can be presumed that the results were given yearly evaluations and that modifications from the first arrangement were made. The mingled garden was apparently a variable, blowsy riot of color that changed through the season and over the years in a way that is not documented in its specifics.⁴⁷⁷ There may have been a water source at this garden.⁴⁷⁸ Wooden gates were mounted at each end of the center path.⁴⁷⁹

3. Bethune Road / South Road / New Approach Road

In 1860, when George Bethune was considering the purchase of the steep west side of the hill, he complained to his friend Frederic Church: "The difficulty, however is to get to it - a road cut down such a steep [slope] and made safe (if indeed it could be) would wish more than I could stand (sic)."⁴⁸⁰ What caused anxiety for one man inspired Frederic Church, who in 1864-65 apparently built the road that George Bethune could not bring himself to contemplate. In fact, this was the sort of development that Church relished -- construction of a visually exciting approach road for those entering the property. Later, a visitor seems to have referred to this as the "mountain road"⁴⁸¹ that led to Church's farm.

The Bethune Road was positioned to be a direct link with a private road that was used by the Churches as a shortcut to and from the Greendale station and landing. As such, the Bethune Road was a substitute for the old farm entrance at least until the new South Entrance was constructed in 1879-80. It seems probable that Church intended the Bethune Road to eventually serve the House site, as it provided access up to elevation 380 ft., more than 100 feet higher than Cosy Cottage. It is unclear how long, or to what extent Church or others utilized the Bethune Road, which seems to have been superseded by the South Entrance and South Road at least after 1880.

⁴⁷⁷ Several photographs seem to confirm this, e.g. OL.1987.186; OL.1987.187; OL.1987.189; OL.1987.190; OL.1987.191; and OL.1987.131.18.a. Recollections of this garden as it may have existed in the period after Church's death indicate that there had been many changes from the plants documented as initially ordered for this garden 30 years earlier - interview notes: Mrs. Vera Dietz by ?, 9/10/1971 [OSHS].

⁴⁷⁸ An old hose bib existed there at the time of the garden's restoration.

⁴⁷⁹ OL.1987.131.18.a. These gates were remembered as being painted white in the period after Church's death - interview notes: Mrs. Vera Dietz by ?, 9/10/1971 [OSHS].

⁴⁸⁰ Letter: George W. Bethune to FEC, 8/15/1860 [DHA].

⁴⁸¹ Mack, diary entry, 10/30/1872 [VML]. Mack might have been referring to the North Road except that he was coming from Catskill landing and so approached Olana from the south.

As discussed in the history section, the South Entrance and South Road were developed over many years. While there was access from the south when Church first purchased the property, the final arrangement of the South Road was Church's creation and no portion existed before his development. One reporter described the final route this way: "the approach on the southern side is more direct [than the North Road] and is more open, the road being chiefly lined by evergreens, shrubbery and sumach. It passes near the borders of a pretty lake."⁴⁸² For visitors entering from the South Entrance, the road led for about a mile through a kaleidoscope of visual situations. The South Entrance was arranged at an angle to the public road. This was a popular design form as it contrasted with the more commonplace arrangement where the entrance was perpendicular to the highway. An angled layout was also used at the entrance to the Bethune Road, as was the splayed road at the North Entrance (fig. 22). In all these cases, the public road appeared to simply curve into the property. At the South Entrance, the steep, cliff-like grades east of the public road (Red Hill) also favored an angled layout -- and provided a dramatic backdrop. As far as is known, there were no piers or gate at any of the entrances. There were no immediate fence lines as the entrance areas were not grazed.

Rising in elevation in an open landscape, the South Road turned abruptly east, passing through a low gap and into the wooded area that surrounded the Lake. Exiting the property in this section of the South Road provided a last view to the western mountains. When the road came up to the Lake at its southern end, it turned north and followed along the western shore before slowly ascending the ridge line of the hill. Here, the road hung between the west-facing escarpment overlooking the Hudson and the open slopes of the park to the east. Views in both orientations were possible. After passing the intersection of the Bethune Road / Ridge Road, the South Road curved toward the northeast as it crossed the open park. Once in the open, the House might have been glimpsed up the slope, but there seems to have been a conscious effort to avoid that effect, with the road tucked into the slope where possible and the uphill side planted densely with trees (fig. 34). Trees, including many white birches, were aligned irregularly along this section of the South Road and these further emphasized the road orientation toward the site of Church's Studio, straight ahead (fig. 33).

Until it was dismantled in the late 1880s, the Studio was located close to and east of the South Road, as shown on the 1886 Plan. The arrangement was altered when the New Approach Road was constructed in the period 1887-89. At that point, the South Road was realigned to the east side of the Studio (and soon thereafter the Studio was removed,

⁴⁸² Zabriskie.

although the exact date of this dismantling is unclear).⁴⁸³ The alignment seems to have been done to gain a bit more room for a generous turning from the older South Road alignment onto the New Approach Road, which intersected the South Road just north of the Studio. In this area, off-road grades to the northwest were steep. The sweeping curve between the old alignment and the new was certainly desirable. The portion of the old South Road that remained beyond (north of) the new turn-off was bypassed after the New Approach Road was constructed. The old orientation needed to be de-emphasized. Steep topography and tree plantings helped to hide the old route and in the 1890s the abandoned section evolved into a service area, site of the Greenhouse (fig. 31).

Once turned onto the New Approach Road, moving uphill, the South Road alignment again crossed through the park, now in a westerly direction, before turning north around a hillock.⁴⁸⁴ As the road came closer to the House, Church's intentions as to views of the structure are somewhat unclear (as are many of the subtle nuances of his view management).⁴⁸⁵ Coming along the west side of the hillock, the House is hard to miss, but photographs (fig. 24) clearly show that woodland plantings were augmented and enhanced, and allowed to extend out so that eventually the view up the slope would have been screened (as would the view to the New Approach Road from the House). After the road turned again east, the House was not on a direct view and could be seen only briefly before the road passed into more heavily treed areas as it approached the mingled garden. In summary, while there were some glimpses of the House, it was otherwise hidden wherever possible and was never intended as a focus of views -- a consistent theme along all of Olana's entrance roads. Exiting the property (moving downhill), the orientation directed views away from the House. Exiting on the New Approach Road would have presented a myriad of scenic compositions -- across the park, toward the Lake, the Hudson Valley and the Catskills beyond.

Perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of the upper reaches of the South Road were the white birch trees that dominated that area, apparently from plantings installed from the early years of Church's ownership of the initial farm property. The photographs that show these trees are difficult to interpret.⁴⁸⁶ As noted earlier, birch trees seem to have been planted along the older portion of the South Road that preceded the Studio (fig. 33). Uphill, the photographs show that birch trees were not necessarily placed

⁴⁸³ The new road realignment did not cross through the Studio, so that the structure could have remained after the New Approach Road was begun and the South Road had been altered.

⁴⁸⁴ OL.1987.132.26.g; and others in Album #5 [DHA], show the New Approach Road.

⁴⁸⁵ OL.1987.132.26.c.

⁴⁸⁶ For example: OL.1987.132.26.d; and OL.1986.59.23.

along the road but were located more randomly in the open meadow, and mixed with other trees in open groves (fig. 34). As the New Approach Road was added late in Church's lifetime, the trees higher on the slope were already established and had not been set out with the road alignment in mind.

When the New Approach Road came close to the East Lawn, the retaining wall of the final approach driveway came into view. Against this wall, the mingled garden was developed (fig. 32). As noted in the discussion of the House environs, the New Approach Road ended dramatically with the full view of the east facade of the House, being the same introductory prospects across the East Lawn available if one had entered along the North Road (fig. 27).

4. North Road

The North Road was Olana's principal entrance road leading in the direction of the City of Hudson. It extended for about a mile, from the North Entrance to the House (fig. 22a). The setting was wooded and about 22 acres encompassed the immediate roadway, generally referred to as the North Road corridor. This entrance began at the northern-most corner of the property. The North Entrance was rural in effect but expansive in scale, with a generous open area of about 1/2 acre framed by a forked road arrangement. There is no evidence of a gate, fence or stone piers to denote the private property.⁴⁸⁷ The entrance area (as was the case at all of Olana's entrances) was not grazed. Grazed fields in the adjacent north meadow were fenced separately. The 1886 Plan of Olana shows several trees in the open space between the splayed entry roads, with a wooded backdrop on the west side. There was a sizable area of marshy ground in that area, at the foot of the north meadow. Numerous old oak trees were aligned along the west side of the western splayed roadway. This was an old property line and may indicate that this portion of the road had been a minor road, perhaps a woodlot access road, before Church acquired it.⁴⁸⁸ Church built the eastern splayed roadway after the public road was changed in 1875. With Church's alterations, those coming from the City of Hudson on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road turned off the public road before reaching a point where the Catskill Mountains are seen to the west -- a viewpoint possible just to the west of the North Entrance. But the view was held back, and only after passing through the "splendid" woods of the North Road corridor and

⁴⁸⁷ Dietz Interview, June 1985 [OSHS].

⁴⁸⁸ Today, several of these old oak trees remain.

climbing through a series of switch-back curves that continued all the way to the House, was the view of the Hudson River Valley first revealed -- a spectacular arrival sequence. One visitor described the experience of travelling the North Road this way:

. . . then the wonder and beauty of the mile long avenue where we wound up and up around hairpin turns, and the breath-taking sight when we reached the house and looked off and away at the Catskill mountains in the distance and the Hudson river winding its way at their feet.⁴⁸⁹

Frequent Olana visitor, Susan Hale, indicated Church's design intent in building the long, twisting routes of the North and South Roads, saying these were "invented by Mr. Church to make the place seem as large and remote as possible."⁴⁹⁰

The importance of the North Road in Frederic Church's landscape scheme at Olana is attested to by several historic accounts. One visitor said it was a drive "through thick woods, like the ascent to the Alhambra."⁴⁹¹ Another said she, "mounted 700 feet above it [i.e., the North Entrance] by a new zig-zag road through the forest, and came to the clearing on the top, in which was a picturesque Eastern-looking house . . ."⁴⁹² A newspaper account in 1884 described:

The approach to Mr. Church's house on the northern side is along a winding and wooded road, which constitutes a considerable drive in itself. The hill is very precipitous here, and one looks down at times upon this road directly below him in an almost inaccessible gulf. The expenditure of road-building, and in otherwise bringing this huge, wild, steep mass of earth into suitable shape and condition has been immense.⁴⁹³

Another news article, in 1890, stated: "The eastern side of the hill is covered by a thick natural growth of oak, hemlock, butternut, chestnut, pine and spruce trees, through which a road from the highway winds up to the hilltop."⁴⁹⁴ Grace King experienced the arrival in June 1887, writing: "the road wound and twisted its way up through a magnificent Forest - when all of a sudden - a sprint of the horses brought us in an open space [i.e., the East Lawn] where is this magnificent house - set in a magnificent scene."⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁸⁹ Caroline P. Atkinson, "Autobiography," unpublished manuscript, 11/1892 [private collection]. KLG identified this quotation.

⁴⁹⁰ Letter: Susan Hale to Edward Hale, 11/15/1903 [University of Rhode Island, Special Collections].

⁴⁹¹ Letter: Susan Hale to Miss Lucretia P. Hale, 6/29/1884, in Atkinson, p. 140.

⁴⁹² Marianne North, diary entry, June 1881, in Mrs. J.A. Symonds, ed., *Recollections of a Happy Life*, 2 vols., (London), 1894, pp. 208-209.

⁴⁹³ Zabriskie.

⁴⁹⁴ Bonnelle.

⁴⁹⁵ Letter: Grace King to May, 6/7/1887 [Collection of John Cose, courtesy of Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University Libraries].

Retracing this arrival, the North Road corridor followed rolling topography overhung by mature oak trees as it led south into the property from the North Entrance. The older wood road that is thought to have existed along the western fence line (separating the North Road corridor from the north meadow) was not utilized by Church, but rather a new route lower on the slope was used. While not documented, the alignment was probably selected to hide the meadow as much as possible. The North Road was intended as a wooded entry and views into fields would have detracted from the otherwise embowered forested effect. The North Road corridor was complemented on the east by additional wooded ground on the adjacent property -- before Church's purchase, all part of the same woods. In effect, Church 'borrowed' this neighboring woodland so that there was the impression of a more extensive forested area than was in fact owned by Church.⁴⁹⁶ In areas, Church laid out the new road quite close to the east property line, because here there were no adjacent open fields but rather sympathetic woods and ground that sloped away -- a more attractive prospect than looking up into an agricultural field. As stipulated in his purchase agreement, Church was required to erect a fence on the east property line. He choose to make it as unobtrusive as possible, a fence of barbed wire strung through the woods and fixed inconspicuously to rough timber posts and the trunks of trees.⁴⁹⁷ Along its entire North Road route, Church kept the roadway within the wooded ground, leaving an ample buffer to hide peripheral open areas. That the road extended for over a mile, yet utilized only a limited area, attests to the skillful layout and also the density of the woodland vegetation.

Although the documentation is inconclusive, the rudimentary wood road, thought to have been present in the North Road corridor before Church's involvement, probably continued north towards Cosy Cottage and the Brezie farm. If so, Church preserved this route as a handy connector, called for the purposes of this report the lower Farm Road.⁴⁹⁸ The important North Road turned away from this farm route while it was still in the woods and from that point proceeded up the eastern side of the hill through a bowl-shaped area where the grade could be spread over a switch-back route (fig. 41). Despite the ascent (about 130 feet), the length of the road (2,000+ feet) resulted in moderate grades along the road. In this area, the woodland was particularly dense with numerous hemlock trees

⁴⁹⁶ The wooded extension along this boundary line is shown on the 1886 Plan of Olana (fig. 22c), perhaps attesting to its importance.

⁴⁹⁷ Church seems to have been concerned about the visibility of this fence, whose installation was required as part of the terms of sale when the North Road corridor was purchased in 1868. Church would have wished the woods to appear as one piece. According to the deed, Church was given "discretion [sic] so far as the [fence] style thereof is concerned."

⁴⁹⁸ OL.1987.131.24.a.

creating a deeply forested character. At the top, the North Road intersected with the Ridge Road and the original alignment of the South Road before proceeding onto the final approach drive toward the House.

5. Ridge Road and Crown Hill Road

After the north meadow lot was purchased in 1878, a large portion of the area, about 30 acres, was immediately available for hay production and grazing (fig. 22c). The precipitous slope west of the escarpment was fenced to control livestock (fig. 49). The north boundary of the north meadow fronted onto the Oak Hill-Hudson Road and the eastern and south side of the meadow bordered the wooded edge of the North Road corridor.

About five years after the north meadow was purchased, Church converted some of this open acreage to ornamental use as the site of the Ridge Road. This road provided a loop around the north end of the hill. Higher ground was retained as a backdrop within the loop so that views were oriented outward in all directions. In building the Ridge Road, Church asserted his control over the landscape by defining views over much of the northern part of Olana and visually ‘borrowing’ peripheral land well beyond the limits of his own estate. The sequence of views began at the top of the North Road. From there, the Ridge Road proceeded out along the east side of the hill, with views oriented across the open fields, the Dr. Sabine / Ferguson house prominent in the scene (fig. 48). The Ridge Road then wrapped around the northern end of the hill (fig. 49) and returned on the west side (figs. 50 and 51), eventually coming back into woods before intersecting with the Bethune Road further south. The north view, toward Mt. Merino, was unique, while the western views over the Hudson Valley were variations of the view west from the House and from the lawn terraces offering a wide panorama and landscapes depicted in Church’s art.⁴⁹⁹

Travel on the Ridge Road was a constantly changing sequence of views, from the wooded east side of the hill, to the exposed northern prospects toward Mt. Merino, to the distant valley panoramas west and southwest. Traveling in the opposite direction reversed the sequence. It was probably the construction of the Ridge Road that inspired Church’s enthusiastic comments in October 1884 that he was creating “more and better landscapes in

⁴⁹⁹ See, for example; Catskill Mountains from the Home of the Artist, 1871 [OL.1981.13].

this way than by tampering with canvas and paint in the studio.”⁵⁰⁰ Given the variety and interest of the views from the Ridge Road, there was good reason for Church’s elation.

As part of the road construction, grazing and farm use was restricted along the road edge and this ground was then developed as parkland. Approximately 10.5 acres of the former meadow was used in this way, with a new fence line erected out of view, down slope from the Ridge Road (fig. 49). This fence is clearly shown on the 1886 Plan of Olana (fig. 22c) and can be traced on the ground.

The extent to which Church planted new trees and allowed second-growth trees to return to the reserved areas around the Ridge Road is complex and somewhat unclear -- as is typical of these ephemeral elements. The 1886 Plan of Olana was drawn so soon after the construction of the Ridge Road that only a few trees are indicated. Still, the existing site, together with several period photographs and an aerial photograph from 1942 (fig. 68), indicates that the higher ground between the loop road grew back into woods early on. The road itself seems to have had maple trees planted along it at irregular intervals. In the foreground of the views, new plantings seem to have been allowed only sparingly -- a reasonable provision considering that the road was built to exploit the wrap-around, panoramic visual drama that an open foreground allowed. Some trees were retained and some new plantings, or selected second-growth, seems to have occupied the open fields. These remained as foreground features and counterpoints to the more distant views (figs 48, 50 and 51). Elsewhere, the area required occasional mowing to keep its meadow appearance. While panoramic views were maintained in most locations, Church could have screened selected views and otherwise managed the existing vegetation to optimize the effect. As stated elsewhere, the nuances of these manipulations are difficult to identify precisely and changed year-to-year.

The Crown Hill Road, built in 1885, was similar in concept to the Ridge Road. It was built a year later but may have been part of the 1-3/4 miles of road Church said were underway (i.e., planned) in 1884. The Crown Hill Road was a half-mile long alignment that rose about 100 feet in elevation beginning at the Lake and looping around wet ground (labeled “swamp” on the 1886 Plan of Olana) before rising to the top of Crown Hill. Church provided a carriage loop at the top as an overlook (fig. 22b). As is apparent from photographs, Crown Hill provided the best possible overview of the farm, as well as a unique long view to the House and park seen looking northwest (figs. 45 and 46). Crown

⁵⁰⁰ Letter: FEC to EDP, 10/18/1884 [AIHA].

Hill also allowed a long panoramic view across the farmland to the east, with the Taconic Hills in the background.

As the road rose up toward the summit of Crown Hill, it came out into formerly open fields. Moving along the route provided the experience of moving through an upland meadow, with unobstructed views. This was the nature of the site at the time of the road's construction, a situation identical to the Ridge Road which broke out into the open expanse of the north meadow. As along the Ridge Road, Church erected a new fence to restrict grazing and agricultural use in the area close to the Crown Hill Road. The 1886 Plan of Olana clearly shows this, with the intervening area (between the fence and road) dotted with trees, generally indicating parkland (fig. 22b).⁵⁰¹ About 17.2 acres of former farmland were utilized in this way around Crown Hill. While difficult to interpret, photographs from about 1890 (figs. 45 and 46) show a generally open scene near the summit, where only second-growth is visible. After the fence was installed to prevent grazing second-growth vegetation invaded the area as part of the process of natural succession. Field cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*), white pines, maples, black cherries, sumacs and other trees sprouted and these were mixed with invasive shrub varieties and wild flowers. As along the Ridge Road, Church may have planted some trees along the Crown Hill Road. Some larger maple trees remain there today. But in the parkland it appears that Church allowed second-growth to do the job of providing foreground vegetation. After new plants germinated, Church went back and thinned out the growth, leaving space between selected saplings by removing the numerous intervening saplings. By doing this, the selected trees were given the room to grow into specimens and groups, and so parkland would be formed. After the trees had reached maturity, some form of continued mowing would have been necessary to keep further saplings from invading the open areas. Second-growth was only establishing itself at the time of Church's death. Today, many of the trees originally part of the parkland along the Crown Hill Road remain, mixed with the rampant weed-growth of trees that has evolved in more recent decades after management of the area was discontinued (see: Section V - Existing Conditions).

The Ridge Road and Crown Hill Road are two of the most interesting examples of Frederic Church's landscape gardening at Olana. The alteration of fence lines to limit grazing along these roads clearly shows that Church intended these areas to be parkland. Given the ephemeral situation, a full understanding of Church's intent in creating views from these roads involves some conjecture, although within a well-documented context.

⁵⁰¹ This is another example of where the 1886 Plan of Olana can not be interpreted literally as regards the number or location of individual trees.

Church's ideas might well have evolved over time. As it was, these road developments came late in Church's life and his influence over the management of the slow-growing parkland lasted only fifteen years, not nearly long enough to have been considered a mature effect.

6. Farm

Soil quality was critical to the farm's productivity. Today, none of Olana's soils would be classified as "prime" agricultural soils by the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service. Olana has thin, gravelly soils on its upland slopes and deeper, somewhat richer soils in the more level areas. There are some low-lying areas where the soil is wet and high in organic matter. Generally, the Olana farm soils are a silty loam, with a significant presence of shale, called "channery," in the mix.⁵⁰² They are generally well-drained, leaving crops susceptible to drought conditions, especially in areas of thin soils on steep slopes, which are also subject to erosion. In addition, Olana's soils tend to be highly acidic, requiring the application of lime and fertilizers for optimum productivity as meadows and pastures. Olana farm soils are classified today as 'Manlius' and 'Nassau' types. Manlius soils, found in the central farm area where the kitchen gardens and fruit orchards were located, are the better quality, deep and relatively rich. Nassau soils are the more dominant elsewhere, being found around the Lake site, along the entire south side of the farm, and on the slopes of the park north of the Lake site, as well as in large isolated areas throughout the farm's interior, and in the north meadow. Nassau soils are very similar to Manlius but inferior, being shallower, more channery in mix, and thus excessively drained and subject to erosion.

Slopes in these areas are irregular, and there are patches of exposed bedrock on the surface. The worst of these Nassau soils, as seen in large areas of the north meadow, and in a more limited way on the Brezie farm parcel, are ill-suited for crops, being best for apple trees and woodlot. Even use for rough pastures or meadow would bring poor results unless lime and nutrients are regularly added.

⁵⁰² According to the Soil Conservation Service, USDA, channery soils contain at least 15% fragmented sandstone, slate, limestone, schist, or, as at Olana, shale, in pieces up to 6 inches in length. A single piece is called a "chanter."

A modern look at the expected yields from these soils illustrates their limitations.⁵⁰³ For example, today's prime Columbia County soils are expected to produce up to 135 bushels of corn per acre, while the best Manlius soils might produce 90 bushels (about 66% of optimum yield) and Nassau soils substantially less. As to hay, prime soils will produce 4 to 6 tons per acre, while Manlius and Nassau soils can be expected to yield only 2.5 tons on average (about 50% of optimum yield). Oat, wheat and grain production is generally better. 80-100 bushels of oats and 50-60 bushels of wheat would be expected from prime soils, while 75 bushels of oats and 45 bushels of wheat would be expected from an acre of the best Manlius soil (about 80% of optimum yield).

To describe the usefulness of these soils as pasture, the Soil Conservation Service has developed a unit of measure called A.U.M. (Animal Units per Month). One unit is the amount of forage or feed required to feed one horse, one cow, one mule, five sheep or five goats for 30 days. Using this measure, prime soils allow 7.5-8.5 A.U.M., while the Olana farm's best Manlius soil provides about 6.5 A.U.M., and the poorest Nassau soil only 4.0 A.U.M. -- less than 50% of the optimum yield. In summary, the soils on the Olana farm could be worked for a full array of needs, but their characteristics were not suited to optimum production. Before Church's purchase, Levi Simmons achieved modest results. A comparison of his yields to the period's expected production shows that the Simmons farm was hard pressed to sustain even average returns for the output in cost and effort inherent in this age of hand labor and horse-power.⁵⁰⁴

As will be described, Church seems to have matched his crops according to the appropriate soils. For example, he located his Kitchen Garden and much of his arable ground in the best soil areas, and eventually abandoned farming in several areas of poorer soils. Soil limitations no doubt decreased the value of this agricultural land and suggest that the farm's earlier role as a subsistence family farm was hard, and in the end untenable. In turn, this situation may have provided the opportunity for the land to respond to new management as a gentleman's farm, whose purpose was only partially related to utilitarian farming and not at all to eking out subsistence. In the end, Frederic Church purchased the

⁵⁰³ Expected yields figures are taken from Soil Conservation Service studies issued in 1989. By comparison, Levi Simmons (who farmed the land prior to Church's purchase) produced only a fraction of what is expected from the same soils under today's husbandry practices and hybridization.

⁵⁰⁴ In the table below, 1875 census information show the average yield for selected crops in Columbia County in that period. This is followed by Levi Simmons comparable yields, roughly calculated based on available census data.

Corn: 18.0 bu. per acre, vs. 11.1 bu. per acre (61% of average).
Oats: 22.7 bu. per acre, vs. 10.0 bu per acre (44% of average).
Winter wheat: 17.2 bu. per acre, vs. 3.0 bu per acre (17% of average).
Hay: 1.2 tons per acre, vs. 1.2 tons per acre (100% of average).

Brezie farm for its potential as an estate residence, for the views of and proximity to the Hudson Valley, not for the quality of the farm soils.

Church was to be a gentleman farmer.⁵⁰⁵ He had had no previous experience with farming, but he aspired to country life and took to it with complete dedication. It would be a mistake to interpret the farm as of secondary interest to Church, as if it were merely supportive of his other activities on the property, because the farm was the property during the first decade of Church's ownership and remained integral to it throughout Church's lifetime. Importantly, he called the property "the Farm" throughout his lifetime. While Olana's landscape design encompassed other elements -- the Lake, the park, the House and its immediate grounds, and the environs of the extensive road system -- Olana operated as a farm and farm life remained central to the Churches' life style and to the property's sense-of-place throughout the 19th century.

The farm (fig. 22b) included a number of buildings (fig. 118), grouped in a cluster and centered by **Cosy Cottage** built by Church in the first year of his residence (figs. 17, 38 and 39).⁵⁰⁶ In 1871, a visitor noted that the Churches were "still living in their old cottage farm."⁵⁰⁷ It was built in the tradition of a *cottage ornée*. The structure's superb siting is notable. The cottage was reached by a separate driveway (fig. 40) that bypassed the farm buildings and the lower Farm Road, so that it was private and separated to some extent from the agrarian activities at the barn complex. In the early years of Church's development, the drive was planted with irregularly spaced, flanking maple trees. This is a somewhat unusual arrangement not seen elsewhere on the property. Cosy Cottage was oriented south with the protective hill to the northwest. This orientation had the effect of sheltering the cottage from the prevailing winter winds. Intended to be seen from the south, and to look out to the east, the cottage was backed by mature trees on the north, apparently the remnants of an old hedge row that extended on an east-west line, just north of the cottage. The building had narrow horizontal lap-board siding, jerkin-head gables on two separated wings, and such details as a covered stoop, hoods over the windows and an elaborate bird feeder mounted over a window on the south facade. One photograph (fig. 38) shows a hammock strung between two trees. These touches provide the recognizable cottage form and romantic associations. Vines grew on trellises and the Churches are

⁵⁰⁵ Richard L. Allen, New American Farm Book (1869). Discussing a gentleman's farm, Allen described what he termed "amateur farming" by "men who depend for a livelihood upon other pursuits." He went on to say "[the gentleman farmer] does not count the cost, and so he obtains what he wants, charges the expense to 'profit and loss' in his accounts, and lets the matter go - his enjoyment being a full compensation for the outlay." (p. 510).

⁵⁰⁶ JAR and Gromek, "'Cosy Cottage' Historic Structure Report," 4/1996 (draft); and CLF, "The 1994 Archaeological Exploration at Cosy Cottage, Olana," BHS, 11/16/1994 [OSHS].

⁵⁰⁷ North, pp. 208-209.

thought to have had flowers growing nearby. The effect was one of modest but sophisticated farm life.

On the south side of the cottage, a small lawn was laid out, sloping to the south and defined by an encircling carriage drive. A service area was on the north, where a yard was formed in the 'L' of the main structure. Access to this area was along the east side of the cottage (fig. 39).

Close-by was at least one outbuilding, a **cottage shed and privy**,⁵⁰⁸ a board and batten building used for storage that incorporated a privy. Church may have had a chicken coop close to the cottage, and possibly other incidental sheds, probably on this north side. Further north, the cottage was sheltered into the hillside where larger trees, many evergreens, provided a backdrop.

Below Cosy Cottage, to the southeast, was the original Brezie **farmhouse** with the additions that Church made during his residence (fig. 42). The farmhouse had a cottage scale similar to Cosy Cottage, but it appeared as a secondary dwelling simply by its location, age and more austere landscape treatment as compared with Cosy Cottage. At the southwest corner of the farmhouse was a separate small **privy**. Just beyond was an outbuilding used as a **shed**.

Located directly south from Cosy Cottage was the main interconnected **Barn** (fig. 44 and 59). It was built in three phases. First, possibly constructed in 1867, was a structure that extending east-west, with jerkin-head gables, that Church described as his "splendid barn." Interestingly, the north facade of this structure, facing Cosy Cottage, was blank with the Barnyard opening on the south side. Attached to the west end of the Barn were shed additions providing storage and a chicken coop, again accessible only from the barnyard on the south. Attached to the east side of the older Barn was a large dairy Barn built at the end of Church's lifetime in 1899.

Continuing west from the Barn, along the lower Farm Road, was first a gap that provided access into the Barnyard. Beside the Barnyard gate was a small structure believed to have been called the **tool house**, and thought to date from the 1860s (fig. 61).⁵⁰⁹ Close to the tool house was the **farm Stable** (figs. 44 and 61), which probably dated to the initial development in 1860-61. Attached on the west side of the farm Stable was a **wagon house** (fig. 61). The farm Stable had a door facing north and the wagon house

⁵⁰⁸ Roenke and Matejka, "Archaeology Report," July, 1979, p. 6 [BHS].

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 7. The building was dated from newspaper fragments in the walls. the State archaeology report called this building a "small barn or shed near the Stable," taken from the identification of a "tool house" in this general area in 1934 (see, Section IV - Property History After Church's Lifetime). The building shown in a 1934 photograph (figs. 60 and 61) may not be the structure shown in earlier images (OL.1986.373.20.b). It was not in the same location as that in the earlier image.

stalls were also accessible from the north. There were shed attachments to these buildings on the south and a hyphen that linked them.

The Barnyard was enclosed on the south with a fence that extended from the 1899 dairy barn to the farm Stable. Adjacent to this area there was another building thought to be the “little building to accommodate a coachman,” under construction in 1867.⁵¹⁰ Photographs show that this building, tentatively called the **Coachman’s House** (fig. 44), had a door on its west and south sides and two windows on the south, indicating that it may have been used as a staff dwelling. Its proximity to the farm Stable suggests its use by the coachman was possible in the period before the Churches moved to the House. After the completion of the coachman’s dwelling uphill on the north side of the Stable, this structure may have served another purpose. After Church’s death, it was remembered as a garden (potting, tool storage) shed related to the adjacent Kitchen Garden, but decisive evidence of this, or when this use began, is unclear.⁵¹¹

Further west, on the opposite side of the lower Farm Road, was the **pump house** (fig. 63), possibly constructed in about 1894 when Church purchased a steam pump used to bring water to the House. This structure is not shown on the 1886 Plan. There was a covered porch on the east side of this building that served as a sawmill/wood storage area (fig. 44). Close to the northeast end of the Lake, was a Corn Crib (fig. 64). This small building was referred to in 1868 as in need of a new shingle roof, as the “straw roof is full of holes,” indicating that it may have pre-dated 1860. A bit east of this, along the south side of the lower Farm Road, was the **granary** (fig. 62). South of this, against the dam, there seems to have been a **Earth Cellar** (root cellar),⁵¹² and a bit further south, a sizable **Ice House** (fig. 65).

During Frederic Church’s period of residency, farm acreage was subdivided by field lines into separate areas, with different uses. Some of these areas changed configuration over time. A part of the farm was ploughed, including the north orchard (15.5 acres), the Kitchen Garden (1.4 acres), the enclosed cottage garden (2.9 acres) the farmhouse lot (3.7 acres) and the so-called “Cultivated Ground” (.7 acres). This is a total of about 24 acres.⁵¹³ A complete list of separate farm areas and fields follows:

⁵¹⁰ Memorandum: Charles Schoenect to PRH, 6/16/1971 [OSHS]. This report calls the building a, “small barn,” but this description is now thought to be incorrect.

⁵¹¹ Boice Interview, June 1969 [OSHS].

⁵¹² In locating this building, see: Kenneth Lutters (hereafter cited as KL), map entitled: “Olana [showing detail near east end of the Lake],” 3/24/1981 [OSHS].

⁵¹³ Areas were calculated from the Existing Conditions Plan (fig. 116) and illustrated on the Period Reconstruction Plan (fig. 117).

The **cottage grounds** (about .8 acres) included the immediate area around the cottage, the looping driveway and intervening lawn, and the north service yard. The Barn was located about 160 feet to the south of Cosy Cottage. Pine trees were planted at the south and southwest side of the lawn, presumably for backdrop and screening. Deciduous trees were planted closer to the cottage on the south. The boundary on the east was set off as a steep bank, graded to allow an unobstructed view to the east.

The **Barnyard** (about .6 acres) was located south of the Barn and tool house, bounded on the south by the Coachman's House with access from there outward to the south grazing fields. Much of this area was open ground, but a row of American elms, presumed planted by Church, provided welcomed shade through the late 19th century.

The main **Kitchen Garden** (about 1.4 acres) was located south of the farm Stable and wagon house and east of the Lake dam (fig. 44). This garden was irrigated using water piped from the Lake. Church spoke of laying out this garden in 1880, although the area may have been arable ground earlier. The location, close to and south of the barn complex, and in relatively good soils, was ideal. It may be that Church used the cottage garden (see below) and possibly the farmhouse lot as kitchen gardens before this area came into use after 1880. A wide variety of vegetables and cutting flowers were grown in this garden.

The **cottage garden**, previously mentioned, was a fenced enclosure (about 2.9 acres) sited east of Cosy Cottage on an east-facing slope (fig. 36). Photographs show varied layouts and components in this area, as befits an actively cultivated plot. The 1886 Plan of Olana shows it as ploughed ground. The location, close to Cosy Cottage, seems to suggest Church's direct involvement in the area. Much of it seems to have been reserved for fruit production, which may have included cherries, pears, peaches and plums, as well as grapes and such bush fruit as currants, strawberries and raspberries.⁵¹⁴ The cultivation of fruit was of special interest to the Churches.⁵¹⁵ The fenced enclosure may have been used for other crops before the Kitchen Garden was developed in 1880.

The **north orchard** was the sizable (about 15.5 acres) area of open ground that was a large ploughed apple orchard (fig. 43). This is one of the farm's largest single fields. The undulating ground was bounded on the north and east by a stone wall which incorporated numerous old trees, indicative of its role as one of the original boundaries of the Brezie farm. The west boundary line is formed by the north-south lower Farm Road,

⁵¹⁴ Susan Hale mentioned bush fruits in her correspondence concerning the property when she spoke of: "Fruit; cherries, raspberries, currents, all from our own [i.e. Olana's] garden." - Letter: Susan Hale to Mrs. Lucretia P. Hale, 7/6/1884, in Atkinson, p. 142.

⁵¹⁵ See for example, Letter: FEC to JC, 4/15/1864 [DHA].

while the south abuts what appears to have been an old hedge row. This hedge row included mature trees and extended from a neighboring farm to the east. At some point, the cottage garden, described above, was developed across the old line, obliterating it in that area. The 1886 Plan shows a uniform orchard treatment in the north orchard, with the individual trees spaced well apart. One photograph (fig. 43) seems to support the arrangement. If so, individual trees with 30-foot-wide spread (being a mature apple tree) were well separated. As was common in the period, the north orchard seems to have been habitually ploughed. The 1886 Plan shows the area with a tan wash that elsewhere represents ploughed ground.

Located northeast from the farmhouse was a **farmhouse lot** (about 3.7 acres). The 1886 Plan shows a fenced and tree-lined demarcation separating this area from the north orchard. This line is of special interest as it appears to be an old line shown to extend into the neighboring property on the east. The farmhouse lot included the Brezie farmhouse, and it may be that the area once supported a separate kitchen garden, ploughed ground and work yards close to the old farmhouse. There may have been an old barn located here (fig. 10) but, if so, this was gone before the 1886 Plan was prepared. The orchard trees shown in this area on the 1886 Plan are widely spaced in a diagonal arrangement, very different from that recorded in later, 1942 aerial photograph, which indicate a more closely-spaced, grid layout. The accuracy of the 1886 Plan is unclear on this matter. Except close to the farmhouse, the area is shown as ploughed land in the 1886 Plan.

Another **secondary orchard** (about 2.3 acres) was located south of the farmhouse. This fenced area was bounded on the west by the main Kitchen Garden and Barnyard, on the north and east by a farm access road with associated fencing, and on the south by a field line. The field is bisected by a drainage swale that seems to have been carried underground through this area. This fenced ground is illustrated on the 1886 Plan as arranged with orchard trees.

Located along the east boundary line, at the farm's lowest elevation, was a small field (about .7 acres) labeled as "**Cultivated Ground**" on the 1886 Plan. It is shown with the tan wash that indicates ploughed land. Indeed, the east boundary is a stone wall, indicating that the adjacent ground was used for crop cultivation at an early date. The area may well have been valued for its rich, deep soils and isolated setting. The lot was well-screened by a grove of trees along the west side and wooded drainage ways on the north and south. The census data for 1875 shows that Church ploughed about 18 acres of ground -- 4 acres for oats, 6 acres for corn, 6 for potatoes, and the rest kitchen garden. The 1886 Plan indicates that about 24 acres were ploughed, a higher figure than the full

total recorded in the census. The difference could be in the north orchard. While included on the 1886 Plan with a tan wash indicating it was ploughed,⁵¹⁶ room must be left for the apple trees themselves, so that the total acreage ploughed would be reduced somewhat to a figure closer to the census figure of 18 acres. As shown here, all this ploughed land was isolated in the northeast corner of the Brezie's farm parcel (fig. 22).

South from the core area of the farmstead were three separate fields (fig. 37). None are shown ploughed on the 1886 Plan. The **east field** (about 6.0 acres) was a trapezoidal shaped open field bounded by fence/wall lines on all sides, indicating its probable use as a pasture. An intermittent stream (that carried the Lake overflow) crossed this field, providing water for the livestock. Directly west was a **west field** (about 6.8 acres), an irregular parcel bounded by fence lines on all sides, the more substantial field stone wall between the fields being the only exception. At some point, it seems likely that the west field was a pasture. This conclusion is based on the presence of secondary fencing that restricted access to an area of wet ground (labeled "swamp" on the 1886 Plan of Olana) along the south side of the field, and the proximity of the Barnyard area. As with the east field, at least a portion of this area may have been arable land in the pre-Church period.

Finally is a **southeast corner lot** (about 5.0 acres). The configuration of this lot, as with those formed from the north meadow (see below), was a result of Church's road construction. The corner lot is bounded on the east by the original east property line of the Brezie farm, and on the north by an east-west fence/wall line that seems to have been in place well before 1885 (it is shown on the 1886 Plan with substantial trees along it). By contrast, the south line, between the corner lot and the summit of Crown Hill, was delineated only with a fence, without any associated trees, being a simple construction of barbed wire mounted on rough timber posts. This alignment was erected in 1885 as part of the development of the Crown Hill Road. The fence alignment allowed the bottom of the hill to remain active farmland, probably pasture (note that the fence line overlapped the west field, allowing direct access for animals to the Barnyard). At the same time, grazing in the southeast corner lot would not infringe on the parkland reserved around the Crown Hill Road, or views from the summit.

Two separate fields made up the north meadow, as follows:

There was a **north field** (about 8.5 acres), fenced on all sides. This was bounded on the north by the Oak Hill-Hudson Road, and on the east by the wooded North Road corridor. On the west was the fence line protecting the precipitous escarpment along the ridge of the hill. The south line was a fence that bisected the total north meadow along an

⁵¹⁶ Orchards were habitually ploughed and used for crops.

east-west line. This fence line followed a broad drainage swale. There are remnants of an old wall along the route indicating its configuration preceded Church's development. This fence line is shown on the 1886 Plan. South was the **south field** (about 10.8 acres). This area was bounded on the north by the old fence/wall line just described, on the east was a fence line bordering the North Road corridor and on the south was an older field stone wall that earlier separated the north meadow from the wooded ground where Church built the House and uphill portions of the North Road. This wall was reinforced with a fence, so that the north meadow could be grazed. On the west side, below the Ridge Road, a new fence line was erected tracing the alignment of the Ridge Road and curving around the contours of the hill. This fence was constructed to be invisible when seen from along the Ridge Road (fig. 49). A photograph (fig. 48) shows raked piles of hay in this field, indicating its use as a meadow, but the fence lines suggest it may also have been used for grazing. The wall lines indicate that it was at some point ploughed, but this is presumed to have been prior to Church's ownership.

SECTION IV - PROPERTY HISTORY AFTER CHURCH'S LIFETIME

1. Louis and Sally Church, 1900-1943

Ten days after Frederic Church's death, Louis returned to Olana from the burial in Hartford, Connecticut. He wrote to Sally Good on stationery framed with a black border: "I am looking after things on the farm . . . taking inventory because I think it ought to be done."⁵¹⁷ A few weeks later, Louis wrote again after some consideration of his options. Louis seems to have been ambivalent about his responsibility and commitment to Olana. He suggested that his newly married brother, Theodore Winthrop Church (nicknamed 'Dad') and his wife Amelie might take over the property:

The best thing for us to do Dear is to let Dad + Amy run the place if they want to and I think they do. We would not be tied down to such a big place. Could go & come as we please, travel if you want to and if our finances demanded it and we had to we could sell the place as a last resort.⁵¹⁸

As the summer went on and the estate settlement became clearer, this and perhaps other options were rejected, although the exact circumstances are not well documented.⁵¹⁹ The couples' long clandestine engagement was finally made public in early October⁵²⁰ and they were married on January 26, 1901. In the spring of 1901 Louis and Sally Church moved together to Olana.

Documentation relevant to the landscape in the early years of Louis and Sally Church's residency is very limited -- in striking contrast to the relatively well-documented years of Frederic Church's lifetime.⁵²¹ Louis Church expanded Olana, acquiring two fields east of the property, about 9 acres, in 1910 and an adjoining parcel of about 18.7 acres added in 1922 (fig. 80). A 1942 aerial photograph (fig. 68) of the property shows that the 9-acre field was open, but the larger lot was by then overgrown. This was about 20 years after the lot was acquired, presumably for agricultural use. The motivation for

⁵¹⁷ Letter: LPC to SGC, 4/16/1900 [DHA].

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5/12/1900 [DHA]. Theodore Winthrop Church was a businessman. He married Amelie van der Kieff in 1899 and apparently considered taking over residence at Olana shortly thereafter. Later, Theodore and 'Amy' lived in New Jersey where Theodore died in 1914.

⁵¹⁹ KLG reports (letter to RMT, 5/16/1996) that Louis Church's finances in the months prior to his marriage were unsettled, with concern expressed that he and Sally Good might not be able to keep Olana - see, letter: SGC to LPC, 12/15/1900 [DHA].

⁵²⁰ Letter: ICB to SGC, 10/4/1900 [DHA].

⁵²¹ Correspondence and other written evidence, including billing records, etc. relevant to the Louis and Sally Church period are almost exclusively in the Olana archival collections and administrative files. These records seem incomplete and may have been partially destroyed during Louis and Sally Church's lifetime.

these land acquisitions is not documented. At an unknown date, the old apple trees at the northern end of the farm were removed.⁵²² This area may have been used for grazing, or for the production of hay. Elsewhere, fields that Frederic Church had kept open became overgrown under Louis Church's management -- even before 1940. At the time of his death, open farmland was actually reduced over the four decades of Louis Church's tenure, even while he added nearly 30 acres to the estate (see below).⁵²³

Louis seems to have had a tangential involvement with the farm. Instead, he was remembered as a skilled mechanic and at an early date, possibly even before his father's death, he seems to have been a car enthusiast.⁵²⁴ Checks from Louis Church to the "Daimler Mfg., Co." in 1899 and 1900 are the earliest documentation indicating this interest.⁵²⁵ Louis Church also subscribed to a magazine on automotive subjects in 1901,⁵²⁶ and probably owned an automobile at about this same time -- certainly in the early years of car ownership in America.⁵²⁷ In 1903, a "steam car" was described in a newspaper piece, which proclaimed: "one of the finest automobiles ever seen in this city [probably Hudson] is that belonging to Louis P. Church."⁵²⁸ Two months after this sighting, Susan Hale reported on the "glorious Motor Car, . . . Louis is cracked about it."⁵²⁹ An inscription on the wall of a garage building at Olana said in part: "car ran 3,201-1/2 miles in 1904."⁵³⁰ This garage seems to have been erected between the House and Stable in about 1902. It was a small, pre-built, mail-ordered building.⁵³¹ Further evidence of

⁵²² The north orchard is shown cleared on the 1942 aerial photograph (fig. 68). Aerial photograph, #GSAE M-4-160, dated 1942 [originally obtained from USDA, Soil Conservation Service]. The source of this photograph was a soil survey report completed by the Soil Conservation Service, Hudson, NY in 1980 [OSHS]. James R. Calhoun, author of that report, remembers that the photograph was copied from the 1942 series in the USDA office. Joan Rigley, current District Manager, confirms that the 1942 series is in their collection, but the photograph showing the Olana property is missing, suggesting the only copy was used in the 1980 report. After inquires at the National Archives and USDA, the repository holding the original negative of this important photograph has not been identified.

⁵²³ 1942 aerial photograph (fig. 68).

⁵²⁴ Dietz Interview, June 1985.

⁵²⁵ Checks: LPC to Daimler Mfg. Co., 8/27/1899 (\$15.24); and 7/5/1900 (\$14.65) [DHA].

⁵²⁶ Check: LPC to Automobile Magazine, 5/4/1901 [DHA].

⁵²⁷ 1996 is celebrated as the centenary of the first mass production of the automobile. Louis Church, in his late twenties, was certainly an early customer.

⁵²⁸ Unidentified newspaper clipping, 9/14/1903 [OSHS]. Also, Dietz Interview, June 1985 [OSHS]. The first automobile may have been the "old white steamer," described in this recollection.

⁵²⁹ Letter: Susan Hale to Carla Atkinson and Mamie, 11/16/1903 [University of Rhode Island, Special Collections].

⁵³⁰ An otherwise unidentified memorandum, dated: 7/23/1980 describes this inscription, as cited in JAR, "The Master Plan for Olana State Historic Site," unpublished thesis for the Cooperstown Graduate Program, State University of New York at Oneonta, 1984, p. 50 [OSHS].

⁵³¹ Memorandum: PRH to Charles A. Schoeneck, re: "Archaeology at Olana, 1969," not dated, 1969 [BHS]. The foundations of this building were identified in the 1969 archaeological investigation; see additional information in archaeology files, BHS.

the automobile's arrival at Olana was the alteration of the Stable, remodelled to accommodate fewer horses and allow storage of an automobile. As part of this remodelling, the Stable yard was changed. The wood apron that had edged the Stable doors was removed, replaced by a brick surface. It appears in photographs dated 1902-c.-1914,⁵³² although the installation of a small area of brick may date earlier.⁵³³ This brick surface was expanded to cover a larger area of the Stable yard in 1929.⁵³⁴

The internal combustion engine profoundly affected the Olana farm, substituting tractor power for the horses and oxen known to Frederic Church. The date of this introduction is unknown. In 1943 an inventory recorded the presence of a 1922 Ford tractor, as well as tractor ploughs.⁵³⁵ Despite the new convenience, it seems certain that fewer acres were ploughed by the end of Louis Church's lifetime than had been the case in his father's years, but this situation could have varied year to year and definitive evidence is lacking. In general, Olana operated as before Church's death, with only a slow evolution during Louis Church's lifetime.

As documentation for the early years of Louis and Sally Church's residence is very limited, the recollections of a neighbor, Granvill Hill, substitute as a source of information.⁵³⁶ Mr. Hill remembered that during World War I, Louis Church cut timber along the North Road. Despite this, Louis was said to have tried, "to keep the trees the way his father had them and keep the weed trees cut down." Louis was said not to have been interested in "profit" in his management of the woods.⁵³⁷ At the same time, disagreement arose over a dump developed by Louis Church on the south sides of the Lake, close to Granvill Hill's property line. Views from Crown Hill Road and Ridge Road were recalled, indicating that these planned overlooks remained unencumbered. Generally, the landscape and its use remained unchanged in the first decade of the 20th century. A series of important photographs taken in 1906 by John Eberle⁵³⁸ show that at this point,

⁵³² OL.1986.378.34 c-e. According to Karen Zukowski (note to RMT), these photographs date to 1902-c.1915.

⁵³³ Check: FEC to Eastern Paving Brick Co. (\$44.10), 10/15/1897 [DHA]. This is the only evidence of the presence of a brick surface in Church's lifetime.

⁵³⁴ Aileen Stevenson, "Preliminary Restoration Report for the Stable-Coachhouse Complex," 1973 [OSHS].

⁵³⁵ LJB, Property Appraisal, 8/5/1944 [BHS].

⁵³⁶ Interview notes, Granvill Hill by ARF, 1/8/1974 and 3/27/1974 (hereafter cited as: "Hill Interview, January 1974") [OSHS]. Quoted material in this discussion is from this oral recollection.

⁵³⁷ Ibid. Granvill Hill is quoted in these passages. Work to, "keep the weed trees down" was critical to Church's landscape gardening (as on the Ridge Road and Crown Hill Road). See: Section III - Design Description).

⁵³⁸ John Eberle, a photographer based in Red Rock, NY, came to Olana and took 75 photographs between Sept. 29 - Oct. 8, 1906, as documented in his original ledger book now in the collection of the CCHS. 38 of these photographs are in an album still at Olana (OL.1987.131.1-38) and many others exist as loose,

six years after Frederic Church's death, there was little apparent alteration to what was now a mature landscape remaining as Church would have known it.

From the time of their marriage, Louis and Sally Church wintered in Florida, usually spending November to April there. In the period 1907-08, Louis, with the cooperation of his brother Theodore, operated a business shipping oranges, a unique example of Louis's entrepreneurial activities in these years.⁵³⁹ Later, in 1918, the couple purchased a building lot in Florida and built a cottage there.⁵⁴⁰ Olana was a summer residence.

After her father's death in October 1913, Sally Church inherited part of the family's estate and these monies seem to have contributed to the maintenance of Olana in subsequent years.⁵⁴¹ The details of Louis and Sally Church's finances have not been researched, but these circumstances may have been critical to preserving the landscape after Frederic Church's death.

At an unknown date, probably in the mid-1910s, Louis and Sally Church' built an elaborate flower garden on the East Lawn.⁵⁴² One scholar concluded that the garden was installed in the late 1920s,⁵⁴³ but interviews assert that the garden was initially maintained by a staff person thought to have left the property in about 1923.⁵⁴⁴ Whatever its date of construction, the garden covered nearly an acre of ground and was an arrangement of straight brick walks and steps, a water basin and other features that replaced the East Lawn (fig. 53).⁵⁴⁵ This garden was habitually referred to as the "flower garden," and is referred to as the "20th-century flower garden" for the purposes of this report. It was shown on

signed photographs. To date, a total of 46 separate images in the Olana collection have been connected to Eberle. For further information, see: Eberle file, OSHS.

⁵³⁹ Letter: LPC to Theodore Winthrop Church, 5/1/1908; also, letterhead, 5/31/1907 [DHA]. There is no further evidence of this venture.

⁵⁴⁰ Daniel Chait, "Quick Action Documents Church History," The Crayon (newsletter of OSHS), Vol. XXVII, No. 202 (Spring 1996).

⁵⁴¹ George S. Good died October 14, 1913. Available documentation in the DHA is fragmented and the extent of Sally Church's inheritance, while considerable, is unclear from current research.

⁵⁴² Photographs showing the garden development are not definitively dated, but were tentatively placed in the period 1914-15. Oral history recollections also identify a date in the mid-1910s - interview: Vera Dietz by RS, 9/10/1971; and Dietz Interview, June 1985 [OSHS]. The garden is shown on an extant plan, entitled: "The Garden, L.P. Church, Mt. Merino," scale: 1"=200', by J. McClure Wardle, architect; F.J. Harrington, surveyor, 6/1929 [DHA]. The purpose of this plan is not understood.

⁵⁴³ KLG reports (letter to RMT, 5/16/1996) that scholar David C. Huntington annotated a photograph of the garden with these words: "garden built in 1920s . . . patterned [i.e., designed] after a garden in Iran."

⁵⁴⁴ Dietz Interview, June 1985 [OSHS].

⁵⁴⁵ David Huntington suggested a source for this garden (see note #543). One photograph at Olana (OL.1981.494.90), shows a garden in Tehran, Iran which includes design elements, notably brick piers and steps, that are similar to those used in the 20th-century flower garden on the East Lawn. Louis and Sally Church may have had this photograph in mind when their garden was designed. The author wishes to thank Karen Zukowski for pointing out this photograph.

several photographs.⁵⁴⁶ While not documented, Church's mingled garden was apparently abandoned as attention shifted to the new garden. In association with the more elaborate garden feature, there were also changes in the carriage turn-around. A photograph dated 1929⁵⁴⁷ shows that the stone retaining wall on the north side of the turn-around had been raised to form a parapet, replacing the earlier rustic railing. While the retaining wall remained a dry-laid construction, the wall extension had mortared joints -- a more finished appearance. Jardinieres were placed at the ends of the parapet wall and a spruce tree (about 15'-18' tall in 1929) was located in the center circle. Other photographs from this period⁵⁴⁸ show that the service area has been cleared of much of the understory vegetation that earlier characterized the area. While this tidied-up the woodland, the clearing also opened views into the service area north of the House and Stable yard, in contrast to the situation in Frederic Church's lifetime.

The 20th-century flower garden was aligned on an axis linking the front door of the House with the viewpoint from the top of the New Approach Road, underscoring the continued importance of this route as an approach to the House. The New Approach Road remained a prominent route and was apparently used in a habitual way even after Louis Church's death in 1943.⁵⁴⁹ After 1888, when the New Approach Road was installed by Frederic Church, the bypassed section of the earlier South Road evolved into something of a service area -- the location of the Greenhouse,⁵⁵⁰ out of view from the entrance drives and House grounds.

Circumstances on the farm at the critical juncture of Frederic Church's death are not apparent from the available documentation. The large dairy Barn, built in 1899, suggests that a conscious program of developing a dairy herd had been initiated. If so, the particulars of this venture remain elusive. The property's manager in 1900, Peter VanOrsdell (possibly spelled Van Arsdale), is not again mentioned. In 1915, census information identified the farmer as William Pectal.⁵⁵¹ Early in Louis Church's management, Charles Frier was hired to care for the Kitchen Garden. He remained at Olana until about 1920,⁵⁵² eventually living with his family in the House. Charles Frier

⁵⁴⁶ OL.1987.235; OL.1982.1513; OL.1987.239; OL.1987.251; OL.1987.312; and OL.1987.317 [DHA].

⁵⁴⁷ OL.1987.280.

⁵⁴⁸ OL.1987.49 and OL.1987.88.

⁵⁴⁹ The New Approach Road (South Road after 1889) appears to be in active use on both the 1942 and 1967 aerial photograph (figs. 68 and 69).

⁵⁵⁰ Boice Interview, June 1969 [OSHS].

⁵⁵¹ 1915 census [OSHS].

⁵⁵² Dietz Interview, June 1985 [OSHS]. It was apparently Charles Frier who left his initials: "CHF" with the dates "1900, 1901 1902" on a rock later found in the foundation wall of the saw mill attached to the pump house - memorandum (reporting archaeological investigations): Joseph McEvoy, Arnold Cogswell to PRH, 8/29/1974 [BHS].

appeared in several of the Eberle photographs taken in 1906, and his daughter, Mrs. Vera Dietz, has provided extensive oral history recollections from the period after about 1920. In 1917, Reuben Wilsey was hired, perhaps as the farmer after Pectal's departure -- a succession that suggests (despite the lack of definitive documentation), that there was some instability with the staff in these decades. Wilsey, on the other hand, evolved as a key Olana staff person, spending nearly fifty years on the property. Initially housed at the farm, he moved with his family to the coachman's dwelling attached to the Stable in about 1923, after Charles Frier's departure.⁵⁵³ In some correspondence Wilsey was referred to as the "chauffeur," but he was also a general handyman and the gardener / groundsman in the area around the House. By the time of Louis's death in 1943, Wilsey was de facto superintendent, responsible for the property while Louis and Sally Church were away from Olana. Wilsey submitted bills that incorporated separate accounting for the farm, which was operated as a nearly separate entity.

In 1925, Seymour June was hired as the farmer,⁵⁵⁴ replacing Wilsey who had moved up the hill to the coachman's dwelling. June remained the farmer until after Louis Church's death. Eventually, Seymour June shared duties with his son, Stanley June, and periodically they were helped by other June family members, Eaton and Andrew.⁵⁵⁵ Apparently Seymour June, his wife and family lived at Cosy Cottage, while Stanley and his family were at the old farmhouse.

While the automobile had little direct effect on the Olana landscape it made its presence felt along the edges of the property.⁵⁵⁶ There, the old rural lanes were being upgraded and these improvements began to have a significant impact as the post-Depression years encouraged public works projects. The first of these impacts occurred in 1930 when the highway to Hudson was changed along the northern boundary of Olana. The new alignment reused the older route abandoned in 1875 when Church built the North Entrance. With this change, the highway to Hudson no longer led to the east. A short segment of new public road was needed to bring the private entrance on the west to the new highway (fig. 55).

⁵⁵³ Interview: Helen Howe, Dot Wilsey and Dorthea Wilsey Wentworth, by JAR and Karen Zukowski, 8/13/1991 (hereafter cited as "Wilsey Interview, August 1991") [OSHS]. Information regarding Wilsey in this discussion is taken from this interview.

⁵⁵⁴ Letter: Morris L. Husted to Governor Nelson Rockefeller, 8/1/1970 [BHS].

⁵⁵⁵ Interview: Helen Howe (maid at Olana, 1931-35), by Kathleen Gray, 9/5/1991 (hereafter cited as "Helen Howe Interview, September 1991") [OSHS].

⁵⁵⁶ The history of the American landscape, as related to the age of the automobile, was the antithesis of the Romantic period's impulse toward celebration of natural forms and rural life lived in harmony with nature. These themes are well-illustrated in Olana's environs.

In 1932, it was announced that bridge construction over the Hudson River, linking the Village of Catskill and the City of Hudson, would occur at a point opposite Olana. Pursuant to this major project, there were alterations to the public highway at Olana's South Entrance. These changes necessitated land purchases and redesign of the South Entrance. The Oak Hill-Hudson Road was realigned so that a wider, straighter route was laid out to the west of the old route. To reach the new road, Louis and Sally Church purchased a 1/2-acre parcel from the south neighbor (Hill), and a 1/8 acre piece from the west neighbor (Hallenbeck) that allowed construction of a driveway extension to the new road (figs. 55 and 80).⁵⁵⁷ Later, portions of the abandoned road, and peripheral pieces that lay between the highway and Olana's property boundary, were acquired by Louis Church to complete the new arrangements. Unfortunately, a small lot just north of the Olana entrance was transferred to other ownership and this was later developed for commercial use -- Stack's Restaurant -- catering to the new mobility of the automobile.⁵⁵⁸ The Rip Van Winkle Bridge, which substantially increased traffic around Olana, was erected in 1933-34 (fig. 54). The bridge resulted in a severe intrusion into the views from Olana, a fact well illustrated when staff watched the dedication celebration from the Ridge Road in 1934.⁵⁵⁹

That same year, a severe storm, probably a hurricane, swept through Olana and did considerable damage to the trees.⁵⁶⁰ Especially hard hit was the park, where thin soils, old, more massive trees and the exposed, windswept site proved a vulnerable mix. The result of this incident may explain the loss of many of the specimen trees shown in photographs of the park from this period. How Louis and Sally Church reacted to this tragedy is unrecorded, but they seemed favorable to the more open park. The downed trees were not replanted, and some areas that Frederic Church kept as wooded -- as along the north shore of the Lake and just below the lawn terraces south of the House -- were cleared, creating quite a different effect from the situation in Church's lifetime (figs. 79 and 80).

Perhaps as a result of the severe 1934 storm, a detailed assessment of the property insurance was undertaken in 1934. The insurance forms include important documentation, offering full descriptions and photographs of the farm outbuildings (see figs. 56 through 65). For many of these secondary buildings this is the only evidence of their appearance

⁵⁵⁷ Hill Interview, January 1974.

⁵⁵⁸ Stack's Restaurant was developed in the 1950s. It closed in 1969 after the State purchased the property [BHS].

⁵⁵⁹ Howe Interview, September 1991 [OSHS].

⁵⁶⁰ Wilsey Interview, August 1991 [OSHS].

and siting as they may have appeared in Frederic Church's lifetime.⁵⁶¹ A follow-up insurance estimate of 1943⁵⁶² shows that all the farm outbuildings remained as they were in 1934, indicating consistency in the farm operations during these years when Seymour June was the farmer.

As mentioned above, an aerial photograph taken in 1942 is the earliest known aerial view of the site (fig. 68). This image documents the situation only a year before Louis Church's death, showing the changes since his father's death four decades earlier. Despite the development of the dairy Barn and continued employment of a farmer, it is clear that extensive areas -- totalling perhaps 1/3 of the open farm acreage in Frederic Church's lifetime -- had been abandoned from farm use before Louis Church's death. This total included all of the former north meadow area, about 20 acres. By 1942, the north meadow seems to have been long-abandoned to second-growth, melding with Church's earlier parkland close to the Ridge Road. The southern portion of the west field (about 3 acres) and the southeast corner lot (about 5 acres) had also been abandoned as open ground before 1942. In this way, the acreage acquired by Louis Church in 1910 and 1922 (approximately 28 acres) did not offset that abandoned from farming during his ownership.

Despite the second-growth in fields below the Ridge Road and the Crown Hill Road, views from these scenic roadways remained open throughout this period, if only because the trees nurtured there by Frederic Church were only about 15 years old in 1900. Even with minimal care, these trees would not have been expected to screen the outward views for several decades after Frederic Church's death.

Other changes described above are documented on the 1942 aerial photograph. The north orchard had been cleared of all the apple trees that once grew there. Some of the area seems to have been recently ploughed. The extensive loss of trees in the park, and along the north shore of the Lake, is evident, as are the road adjustments at the South and North Entrances. Louis and Sally Church's flower garden on the East Lawn is visible, and the continued use of the New Approach Road is apparent by its worn appearance -- all these circumstances are confirmed in this important aerial view.

A year after the 1942 aerial snapshot, at the end of the 1943 summer season, Louis Church suddenly died at age 72 on November 8, 1943.⁵⁶³

⁵⁶¹ It must be remembered that the appearance of some of these buildings, notably the Corn Crib and other small sheds, may have been altered in the 34 years after 1900.

⁵⁶² 1934 Insurance Report, and "Standard Farm Form," for Union Insurance Society, by Lukens, Savage and Washburn (brokers), policy # 18941, 2/11/1943 [DHA].

⁵⁶³ Boice Interview, January 1969 [OSHS].

2. Sally Church, Charles T Lark, Jr. and Lloyd J. Boice, 1944-1966.

Distraught over Louis Church's death, Sally Church nevertheless left for Florida as had been planned. Quickly she turned to her family. A brother-in-law, Charles T. Lark, managed the estate. The Larks were based in New York City. Sally Church's involvement continued after her return to the property in the summer of 1944. In that first year, the site operations remained as Louis Church had known them, but even at this early date there were signs of the profound changes to come. From the first, and for many years thereafter, Sally was ambivalent about selling the property, so that ongoing expenditures were discouraged. In the first year, expenses were cut on the farm so that Seymour June later complained that he was reduced to feeding table scraps to the formerly grain-fed pigs.⁵⁶⁴ Over the winter of 1944-45, a decision was made to stop all subsidies for the farming operation. Charles T. Lark wrote to Seymour June at the end of November saying that Mrs. Church no longer wanted the burden of running a farm.⁵⁶⁵ Lark hoped that someone would be found to operate it on a shared basis, with Sally Church receiving 1/3 of any income. Seymour and Stanley June were offered this option but refused, with Seymour June somewhat indignantly saying that Louis Church would never have asked that the farm be profitable and that a living could not be made from the share-plan proposal.⁵⁶⁶ Seymour and Stanley June left Olana in March 1945, Olana's last salaried farmers. Andrew June remained. He was given accommodations rent-free, with the provision that he deliver milk, vegetables and fruit to the household on a daily basis.⁵⁶⁷ How long this arrangement lasted is not recorded. At least one tenant farmer rented the farm acreage, operating under a sometimes vague set of conditions that included help with ice cutting and the supply of vegetables and milk to the household.⁵⁶⁸

When Louis Church died, a local real estate broker named Lloyd J. Boice prepared an appraisal of the property, putting Olana's value at \$45,000.⁵⁶⁹ At this date there were 2 horses and 4 cows on the farm. Boice lived only a few miles from Olana, in Germantown, and gained the trust of Charles T. Lark, and subsequently Charles T. Lark, Jr. who

⁵⁶⁴ Letter: Seymour June to SGC, 12/29/1944 [DHA].

⁵⁶⁵ Letter: Charles T. Lark to Seymour June, 11/30/1944 [DHA].

⁵⁶⁶ Letter: Seymour June to SGC, 12/29/1944 [DHA].

⁵⁶⁷ Boice Interview, June 1969 [OSHS].

⁵⁶⁸ Lease: (for use of Cosy Cottage and 190 acres of farmland) to Otto F. Koeppe, 5/30/1946 [DHA].

⁵⁶⁹ LJB, Property Appraisal, 8/5/1944 [BHS]. This estimate did not include the household furnishings or collections. Boice described Olana as, "a farm and residential property . . . made up of three parcels adjoining each other," apparently a reference to the two purchases of land that Louis Church had added to the property left by his father. Boice said that 75 acres was, "tillable," with 4 acres in orchard trees and grapes.

managed Sally Church's affairs after his father died in 1946. Under Charles T. Lark, Jr., Lloyd Boice came to serve as Olana's superintendent, a position of importance at Olana after the farmer had been terminated. Boice supervised grounds work, road maintenance, roofing, painting and tree removal, earlier accomplished by the farmer and his crew. Boice also kept the idea of selling the property active, reporting on several potential buyers during the time that he and the Larks were a team.⁵⁷⁰

In this period, Reuben Wilsey and his family continued to serve as the house staff, which functioned independently of the farm, and initially from the direct control by Lark and Boice.⁵⁷¹ As attested to in the voluminous correspondence, to enter into the domain of the Olana house staff was to travel in stormy waters. Wilsey continued to submit his accounts, initially including Seymour June's farm bill in his total, as he had been doing for Louis Church, but now these statements went to Lark, who in turn sent formal, professionally typed monthly reports to Sally Church.⁵⁷²

Charles T. Lark, Jr., acting on behalf of Sally Church, was reluctant to spend monies that Boice thought necessary to keep the property well maintained.⁵⁷³ In 1950, Boice was so exasperated that he quit and was only persuaded to return to the property 18 months later.⁵⁷⁴ In 1954, Boice suggested removing some disused farm outbuildings, because of their deteriorated condition and repair cost and the possibility of a tax reduction once these structures were gone.⁵⁷⁵ The subsequent removals included what Boice later remembered as "13 buildings."⁵⁷⁶ The exact count can be difficult to trace, but certainly in this number were the west wing and kitchen addition at Cosy Cottage, and such outbuildings as the Corn Crib (fig. 64), Ice House (fig. 65), granary (fig. 62) and the wagon house (fig. 61), with associated shed attachments and connectors.⁵⁷⁷ The Earth Cellar (root cellar), sheds and/or a privy structure near the old farmhouse, and a woodshed

⁵⁷⁰ A full accounting of the Lark and Boice management of Olana, from the years 1945 through Sally Church's death in 1964, is in the "First Lark Gift" [DHA].

⁵⁷¹ Wilsey Interview, August 1991 [OSHS]. Reuben Wilsey died in 1966.

⁵⁷² Additional records for the years 1944 through the State acquisition in 1966 are in the "Second Lark Gifts" [DHA].

⁵⁷³ Boice Interview, June 1969 [OSHS]. Boice specifically remembered Sally Church pursuing a harsh economy -- even suggesting that he was swindling her with his repeated requests for funding the many needs of the property.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.* Boice claimed that despite these removals the taxes went up: "They [the tax people] said the whole thing looked better with the buildings down[,] that they thought the whole property was worth that much more."

⁵⁷⁶ Letter: LJB to Conrad L. Wirth (hereafter cited as CLW), 1/5/1967 [BHS].

⁵⁷⁷ Boice Interview, June 1969 [OSHS].

(pig house ?) south of the Kitchen Garden may also have been included in the total. Boice mentioned a “machine shed,” whose identity is unclear.⁵⁷⁸

Boice also dealt with the tenants. Difficulties arose with a tenant farmer named Clarence Bennett, who apparently did not fulfill his obligations (including paying unspecified rent) so that Lark and Boice had to evict him.⁵⁷⁹ In 1964, the Thomas family rented Cosy Cottage without obligation for any farm operations.

It was in December 1953 that David L. Huntington, then a 30 year-old student working on his Ph.D. thesis,⁵⁸⁰ first visited Olana and was startled to find in the House a nearly complete repository of artifacts from Frederic Church’s lifetime.⁵⁸¹ Huntington would later be decisive in preserving Olana from certain sale and disassembly (see below).

Late in her life, Sally Church entered into several land transactions, none of which she (or Lark) initiated. These were related to corrections in the property line between Olana and the west neighbor and also resulted from further changes in the public highway along the western and northern sides of Olana. Most devastating was the 1960 purchase, by New York State Department of Transportation, of a road corridor of about 3.7 acres that was used to realign Rt. 23 (fig. 81). The land taken, and the road built through it, severed Olana’s North Road, leaving an isolated, useless remnant of Frederic Church’s splayed North Entrance separated from the rest of the property.⁵⁸² In February 1960, Boice recorded closing the North Road for the last time,⁵⁸³ and a few months later commented on considerable storm damage to the old hemlock trees in the woods along this route.⁵⁸⁴

Sally Church died in August 1964, at age 96. Her longevity had been critical to saving the property, allowing public sentiment toward preservation to evolve. If Sally Church had died earlier, Olana might well have been quickly sold and eventually dismantled.⁵⁸⁵ Charles T. Lark, Jr., Sally Church’s nephew and principal heir, was now the owner of Olana. He immediately planned to hold an auction to begin the sale of the entire property.⁵⁸⁶ Responding to the threat of losing Olana, a not-for-profit group, Olana

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Letters: Clarence Bennett to LJB, 6/4/1951; and LJB to Charles T. Lark, Jr. (hereafter cited as CTL), 10/10/1951 [DHA], and others, detail this incident. Also see: Boice Interview, January 1969 [OSHS].

⁵⁸⁰ This thesis was completed in 1961, titled “Frederic Edwin Church, 1826-1900: Painter of the Adamic New World Myth” (Yale University) [OSHS].

⁵⁸¹ Interview, David Huntington by Dr. Charles Hosmer, 3/1988 (hereafter cited as the “Huntington Interview, March 1988”) [OSHS].

⁵⁸² There was considerable rancor and a lawsuit over this “taking.” See, for example, LJB to CTL, 2/19/1960 [DHA].

⁵⁸³ LJB to CTL, 2/19/1960 [DHA].

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., 4/16/1964 [DHA].

⁵⁸⁵ Huntington Interview, March 1988.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

Preservation Inc., was founded in November 1964 under the leadership of David Huntington, who was by this time teaching at Smith College in Northhampton, Massachusetts. Huntington was a crucial player. He was befriended by Lloyd Boice who, to Huntington's delight was sympathetic to the historic value of the property. In turn, Boice knew many local personalities who were helpful in preserving the site.

The campaign to save Olana began with its designation as a National Historic Landmark in June 1965. This recognition included the landscape, which was seen as integral to the property. Despite Church's recognized historic significance, the fund-raising campaign to save Olana had limited success. Then, on June 27, 1966, an act of the New York legislature, signed by then Governor Nelson Rockefeller, appropriated the monies to purchase Olana. The funds raised by Olana Preservation, Inc. were given to the State and absorbed into the general fund. Olana Preservation, Inc. was disbanded.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁷ Letter: JAR to Mrs. Caldwell B. Esselstyn, 4/7/1980 [BHS].

3. Stewardship, 1967-1996

The effort to save Olana was not focused on landscape preservation.⁵⁸⁸ Clearly the collections, i.e., Church's art work, the household furnishings and their repository, the House, received near-exclusive consideration. In fact, adaptive reuse of the landscape was mandated in the law that authorized the purchase of Olana, which stipulated that the State might; "convey such portions of the heretofore parcel [i.e., Olana] . . . for use as and for a community college."⁵⁸⁹ This was an indication that the effort to save Olana demanded some compromises and that at least initially the landscape seemed expendable. Architectural consultants hired by Olana Preservation, Inc. issued a brief report in June 1966.⁵⁹⁰ In discussing the "use of the property," there was mention of the possibility that the Hudson River Valley Commission (then headquartered in Bear Mountain State Park) and/or a new community college might be accommodated on the Olana acreage. The architects advised that:

The extensive land of the estate provides numerous sites for administration buildings, housing, laboratories and other facilities [for the Hudson River Valley Commission] . . . A substantial amount of land can be devoted to this use [i.e. a community college] without detracting from the important preservation of the site of Olana [i.e. the House] and its views.⁵⁹¹

After the property was acquired by the State, the architects' report fell into obscurity but there continued to be conflicting visions of the Olana landscape, which was imperfectly understood as a historic artifact. David C. Huntington, focused on the House and collections, and distracted by more pressing preservation issues, did appreciate that the landscape represented Church's work and that this aspect of the property had a broader context, writing at one point: "the entire layout of the grounds of Olana constitutes an American adaptation of the English landscape garden of the eighteenth century."⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁸ Documentation for this section is primarily from the 'Central Files,' BHS and in administrative files, OSHS. Information related to the initial preservation of the property is somewhat fragmented. An attempt (by Dennis Wentworth, Regional Historic Preservation Supervisor, NYSOPRHP, Taconic State Park Region) to locate some of these files was unsuccessful. Some personal files (e.g., the papers of Alexander Aldrich, president of Olana Preservation, Inc.) are known to have been discarded (recollection of JAR). Others (e.g., papers of Ann Cuninghame, former secretary of Olana Preservation, Inc.) may remain but have not been retrieved for this study.

⁵⁸⁹ Laws of New York State, 1966, article #9, Chapter 692, p. 1482 [BHS].

⁵⁹⁰ "Olana - A Survey and Report for the Olana Preservation, Inc.," John H. MacFadgen and Edward F. Knowles, Architects, 6/1966 [BHS].

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

⁵⁹² DCH, "Interpretive Analysis of Olana," Office of State History, New York Historic Trust, 7/29/1968, p. 24 [BHS].

But, under the circumstances it was not a foregone conclusion that the entire Olana acreage would be preserved by the State. After acquisition, Olana was put under the auspices of the New York State Historic Trust, a semi-autonomous agency informally under the jurisdiction of the State Conservation Department's Division of Parks. Conrad L. Wirth was the Trust's chairman and he seems to have been informed and involved in setting policies for the property in its early days as a historic site. The Historic Trust did not have the infrastructure to operate a historic site. After its initial development, day-to-day operations and maintenance of Olana were put under the management of the Taconic State Park Commission which operated several park facilities from its headquarters in Staatsburg. Due to its semi-autonomous status, the Historic Trust was able to proceed quickly with plans to open the site to the public. Vollmer Ostrower Associates, landscape architectural and engineering consultants, were actively involved in the design work.⁵⁹³ David Huntington remembered this team as making the needed alterations to the landscape, as for example, "responsible for scraping off the hilltop," removing the water tank and installing the parking lot there. Some of these proposals are seen for the first time on a colored presentation drawing dated December 1966.⁵⁹⁴

During the winter and early spring of 1967, a topographic survey of the property was prepared from aerial photographs (fig. 115).⁵⁹⁵ From this base, construction plans were quickly completed and construction began in the spring of 1967.⁵⁹⁶ The 1967 work made several very significant changes to the Olana landscape. Most fundamental was a new asphalt road system established to bring the visiting public to the top of the hill. The new route was a mishmash of new and old alignments. The South Entrance was retained, as were portions of Church's planned approach on the South Road, but wholly new road sections were added; some were made one-way, and the sequential experience was fundamentally altered from that intended by Frederic Church (fig. 82). The new arrangement was a wide asphalt highway that required substantial earthwork along the route of the old carriage roads. This construction activity was documented on an aerial

⁵⁹³ Huntington Interview, March 1988 [OSHS].

⁵⁹⁴ Plan entitled: "Plan of Mansion Area," by Vollmer, Ostrower Associates, scale: 1"=50', 12/30/1966 [BHS]. In a conversation with RMT, John G. Waite (architect, Historic Trust, hereafter cited as JGW) described the early development as hasty, with decisions made by a few individuals and without the input of historians or scholars who might have investigated the property's historic landscape. The history of this early period of State ownership is a potentially fascinating study but remains, for the moment, unclear in its full chronology and details.

⁵⁹⁵ "Topographic Map - Olana State Historic Site," by O'Brien, Gere and Quinn, Surveyors, 3/15/1967 (scale: 1"=100', 2 foot contour interval) [NYSOPRHP, Taconic State Parks Region].

⁵⁹⁶ "Road Plans, Olana Historic Site," by Vollmer Ostrower Associates, Engineers, Landscape Architects, 1/31/1967 (8 drawings). This construction project is documented in the "construction files," engineers office, Taconic State Park Region, Staatsburg, NY.

photograph taken in late April 1967 (fig. 69). As part of the site's development for public access, a parking lot (43 spaces) was constructed at the top of the hill.⁵⁹⁷ As remembered by Huntington, this lot required the levelling of the hilltop and the demolition of the facilities that existed there, including the cistern on its earthen mound, the water tank, and a garage/storage shed. A new water tank was installed beside the new parking lot to provide continued fire protection for the House.

In order to link the new parking lot with the front door of the House, an elaborate brick and granite walk was also built. This was a distance of about 400 feet. The walk, with its angular step-ramp configuration, followed no historic precedent but was built through the woods and out onto the East Lawn, widening to a sitting terrace opposite the entrance porch of the House (fig. 72 shows this walk).⁵⁹⁸ Later, Edwardian-style benches, never used in Church's lifetime, were set out opposite the House entrance.

With roads, parking and this walkway in place, Olana opened for public visits on June 3, 1967, less than a year after the property was acquired by New York State. While getting the property ready for public visits was a priority, and the work completed by the early summer of 1967 was certainly done quickly, it was also quickly criticized. Within a year, the Chief of Historic Site Management, Historic Trust, wrote to David Huntington that:

the parking lot will probably remain, but there is some interest in providing a 'better' approach to the house. Rather than 'better', it should be the historic approach that Frederick [sic] E. Church planned or used.⁵⁹⁹

The 1968 work was said to have been "without proper supervision by staff of New York Historic Trust."⁶⁰⁰ Later it was concluded that the new asphalt road did not serve the site well but was "a classic example of what happens when utilities are installed at a site before efforts at interpretation are completed."⁶⁰¹ Almost from the start then, the paved road has consistently been evaluated as a non-historic fabrication and an intrusion in the historic landscape.

Still, the public could now move easily to the House, and so attention inevitably turned there. Planning began for the rehabilitation of the coachman's dwelling (north end

⁵⁹⁷ The plans show that there was consideration given to providing backup parking along the Ridge Road (north of its intersection with the North Road). This was never implemented.

⁵⁹⁸ This walk is evidence of indifference to Olana's historic landscape, the criteria of its installation being solely to move visitors from their parked cars (modern convenience) to the House (historic artifact) with maximum utility.

⁵⁹⁹ Letter: William G. Tyrrell (hereafter cited as WGT) to DCH, 11/4/1968 [BHS].

⁶⁰⁰ Memorandum: no author, dated 1/21/1969 [BHS].

⁶⁰¹ Unidentified report or memorandum (?), entitled: "Olana: Historic Site Evaluation," 1970, p. 5. [BHS].

of the Stable) to serve as a visitors center, while the Stable itself would be fitted out to provide “secure storage.”⁶⁰² After undertaking a preliminary study, the visitor center/storage proposal was abandoned as officials became more aware of the integrated unity of Olana and sought to limit modern development in historic outbuildings and on the landscape.⁶⁰³ In this same period, Cosy Cottage was to be rehabilitated by the Taconic Region park personnel to serve as a residence for a site manager (called then the “curator”).⁶⁰⁴ The State gutted Cosy Cottage in the summer of 1968,⁶⁰⁵ but after undertaking a preliminary study⁶⁰⁶ that focused attention on the building’s importance, the remodelling project was not completed. The impetus for this reconsideration was provided by Richard Slavin III, Olana’s first professional site director, who arrived on the property in July 1968.⁶⁰⁷

As part of its initial involvement, the State acquired lands adjacent to the South Entrance in 1968.⁶⁰⁸ The motivation for this purchase was apparently to protect this critical neighboring property across from Olana’s South Entrance from uncertain future development.⁶⁰⁹ Site manager Slavin, interviewed for a newspaper article, indicated that the site would be used for a visitors center, as part of a ten-year plan. There would be parking for 200 cars and visitors would be bused to the house.⁶¹⁰ Later Slavin said: “we originally intended the property on [the west side of] route 9G to [serve as a visitors center].”⁶¹¹ The parcel was a 49-acre site on the west side of Route 9G. There was a small house on the property and Slavin moved into it in the spring of 1969.⁶¹² A roadside fruit stand was also on the property and this the State developed as a maintenance depot and shop. On the opposite side of Rt. 9G, a 1-acre lot formed when the public highway was

⁶⁰² Letter: WGT to Albert S. Callan, Jr., 10/9/1968 [BHS].

⁶⁰³ Vollmer, Ostrower Associates were selected to do the design work on the visitors center - letter: WGT to Harold J. Dyer (Taconic Region Manager, hereafter cited as HJD), 7/22/1968, and 9/11/1968 [BHS]. The project was stopped in January, 1969 - letter: WGT to HJD, 1/10/1969; and Arnold H. Vollmer to Wilbur E. Wright (hereafter cited as WEW, 1/14/1969 [BHS]. In his letter, WGT stated that the project was cancelled because the Historic Trust was involved in developing comprehensive plans for the future of Olana, a reference to the master planning then underway (see below).

⁶⁰⁴ Letter: CLW to Frederick Osborn, 11/21/1967 [BHS].

⁶⁰⁵ Letter: WEW to HJD, 12/5/1968 [BHS]

⁶⁰⁶ Letter: JGW to Roland A. Block, 3/20/1969 [BHS].

⁶⁰⁷ RS, “Editorial Comments by Richard Slavin Concerning the Olana Landscape Report,” 11/25/1996 [OSHS].

⁶⁰⁸ This purchase was finalized in December, 1968. The purchase is documented in the acquisition files at the BHS.

⁶⁰⁹ RS, “Editorial Comments . . .,” 11/25/1996 [OSHS].

⁶¹⁰ Newspaper clipping, The Register-Star, 10/14/1969.

⁶¹¹ Letter: RS to Paul [Schneider?], 10/17/1973 [BHS].

⁶¹² Letter: HJD to WEW, 4/15/1969 [BHS].

realigned in 1934 was also acquired.⁶¹³ Stack's Restaurant and residence, which occupied buildings on this small lot, were rehabilitated and opened as a restoration shop by Taconic Region.⁶¹⁴ With these moves, a State service facility, with its inherent eyesores, grew at the entrance to one of the Hudson Valley's most significant historic properties.

Perhaps the most important land issue related to the landscape in the early years of State ownership was the planned development of the Columbia-Greene Community College. As noted above, use of portions of the Olana acreage for the college campus was explicit in the law that authorized the property's acquisition and the idea remained an issue through 1968.⁶¹⁵ Early in 1967, Alexander Aldrich, who had been active in the efforts to save Olana, wrote to Chairman Wirth: "It may be urgent to get our own decisions [about the community college] made before they meet."⁶¹⁶ In the autumn of 1967, the college development committee was organized and responded formally to possible use of the Olana property. By the summer of 1968, Charles Stattenkirk, an engineer working with the college committee, estimated that about 100 acres would be required for the campus and suggested a study of the Olana property to determine which areas would be useful.⁶¹⁷ This investigation concluded that due to the topography and "the rocky nature of the soil," much of Olana was unsuitable.⁶¹⁸ Expressing vague concern for the "setting of the house," the Historic Trust offered about 40 acres, being the low-lying farm acreage in the northeast corner of the north orchard, as well as the parcels east of Olana that were purchased by Louis and Sally Church after 1900.⁶¹⁹ There was an uncertain tone to official comments about the landscape. For example, Chairman Wirth of the Historic Trust, describing Olana to an official of the Community College, said that "while rugged, [Olana] has a fine forest, interesting geological formations and, of course, is a wildlife sanctuary,"⁶²⁰ without a hint of the landscape's relation to Frederic Church.

But others, including John G. Waite, Richard Slavin and David C. Huntington, understood that Olana's landscape was an integral part of the historic artifact, and eventually these evaluations gained credibility. As discussions with the community college

⁶¹³ For a discussion of these purchases see, memorandum: Deborah S. Gordon to KL - quoting appraisal by M.A. DeAngelus (11/11/1968), 7/19/1995; and acquisition file [BHS].

⁶¹⁴ Newspaper clipping, The Register-Star, 4/6/1976.

⁶¹⁵ Letter: Mrs. C. S. Rowe to Alexander Aldrich, 6/20/1967 [BHS].

⁶¹⁶ Letter: Alexander Aldrich to CLW, 1/13/1967 [BHS].

⁶¹⁷ Memorandum: WEW to WGT, 7/1/1968 [BHS]. This memorandum discusses a meeting held on 6/28/1968.

⁶¹⁸ Memorandum: Percy Lieberman to WEW, 10/1/1968 [BHS].

⁶¹⁹ Letter: CLW to Mrs. Edwin Mulbury, 9/9/1968 [BHS]; and map entitled "Sketch Map showing proposed land areas for Columbia-Greene Community College," approximate scale: 1"=1000', by Rockefeller & Nucci, 9/4/1968 [BHS].

⁶²⁰ Letter: CLW to Mrs. Edwin Mulbury, 9/9/1968 [BHS].

went on, an interpretive analysis was prepared by the State Education Department. This report stated unequivocally that “the site . . . is a single entity.”⁶²¹ Shortly thereafter, with curator Slavin in place, a master planning effort began. A committee was formed and met regularly from late in 1968 through the spring of 1969.⁶²² The last of these meetings resulted in a list of recommendations that included critical points related to the landscape, beginning with the declaration that: “there was agreement that the entire estate should be restored to its condition during Church’s lifetime.”⁶²³ The master plan committee called for a new visitors center to be built on the newly acquired property west of Rt. 9G, suggesting that that may have been the intention behind its purchase, though no definitive proof of this has been found. A visitors center of 12,000 square feet was envisaged, indicating that the committee focused some attention on the space needs of such a facility. Further, the committee asserted that historic Olana should be kept intact, ostensibly rejecting whatever interest the community college might have had in utilizing part of the property for its campus development. In 1970, the State purchased and then resold to the community college a parcel of about 130 acres along the northeast boundary of Olana (fig. 2).⁶²⁴ While the college obtained adequate acreage, the State retained a strip of land along the east side of the the North Road corridor as a buffer (total about 12 acres), apparently to insure that the historic wooded boundary there would be preserved and screened from any peripheral development.⁶²⁵

While Olana’s initial comprehensive “master planning” efforts in 1968-69 did not result in a formal report, the Historic Trust had pronounced, fitfully, that “the house and grounds should represent only the period of Frederic Church’s occupancy, and not the continuum of the estate’s history.”⁶²⁶ This important principle has governed the property’s stewardship ever since. Except for the 1968-69 planning effort, there is little documentation regarding landscape studies or restoration in the early years of Olana’s stewardship. Once the vision of the future Olana had been set forth, the master planning

⁶²¹ The Office of State History, “Interpretive Analysis of Olana,” prepared for the New York Historic Trust (15 pages), 7/29/1968 [BHS].

⁶²² The start of the master planning project was a meeting on November 4, 1968, recorded in a memorandum: JGW to WEW, 11/8/1968 [BHS]. There was a meeting on 12/4/1968 when an outline was presented and agreed to. Subsequent meetings are recorded in February and March 1969.

⁶²³ Memorandum: JGW to members of Olana Master Plan Committee, New York State Conservation Department, Historic Trust, 3/27/1969, p. 2. [BHS].

⁶²⁴ “College to be Erected on Historic River Site Upstate,” New York Times, 9/7/1971 [BHS]. The land acquisition is documented in the files at the BHS.

⁶²⁵ RS, “Editorial Comments . . .,” 11/25/1996 [OSHS]. See, map entitled: “Proposed Land Areas for Columbia-Greene Community College,” scale: 1”=200’, by Rockefeller & Nucci, 6/5/1969. The strip of land was approximately 200 feet wide.

⁶²⁶ JAR, “Olana Master Plan,” 1984, p. 41. The text attributes this conclusion to the “board” of the Historic Trust (Board of Visitors), but no formal declaration of that language has been found.

effort withered without the resources to implement the ideas, but the preservation principles and the need to remove modern intrusions from the historic site set guidelines for the future.

At the start of the 1969 season, more practical concerns held attention. The primary landscape project that summer was renewed care for of the 20th-century flower garden on the East Lawn, to be “restored” at the insistence of Chairman Wirth.⁶²⁷ Close-by, sections of the retaining wall collapsed, a reminder, if needed, that the historic site would require at least a minimum of upkeep just to stay even with its inevitable decline.⁶²⁸ At the close of the 1969 season, Slavin summarized the current status of the property’s care as “severely understaffed,” a concern reiterated the following spring and repeated thereafter.⁶²⁹ In these years, Albert R. Fromberger was the site caretaker (later called the site superintendent) and the grounds crew consisted of one full-timer and one seasonal helper, a total of three persons to handle the buildings and grounds.⁶³⁰

Despite limited staff and resources, Slavin can be credited with addressing landscape issues in a comprehensive way. Most fundamentally, Slavin was instrumental in establishing a support group for the property, with the Friends of Olana formally chartered on May 28, 1971, marked by the first edition of The Crayon newsletter issued in December 1971. The significance of the Friends organization to the landscape is clear from its mission statement, which directs the group: “To advocate for and support the conservation, preservation, development and improvement of Olana.”

For Slavin, this meant the whole property and he projected his management to the site’s edges. In 1970, Slavin suggested that the overgrown fields be reopened and that portions of the carriage roads be cleared of encroaching vegetation and used as walking and cross-country ski trails. Slavin felt these activities might build local interest, and proposed joint projects working with garden clubs and local conservationists.⁶³¹ In 1971, Slavin again reported on landscape planning and outlined future goals with a reference to the work of the master planning committee of a few years earlier.⁶³² Slavin’s report began by

⁶²⁷ Memorandum: WGT to HJD, 9/25/1968 [BHS].

⁶²⁸ The wall collapse was discussed in several letters and memorandums, see: letter: RS to James R. Hamilton, 5/10/1968 [BHS]. This letter indicates that the collapse occurred in January 1968. In the summer of 1968, a substantial concrete and stone veneer (mortared joint) wall was constructed to replace the dry-laid wall.

⁶²⁹ RS, “A Progress Report from Olana for the 1969 season;” and, memorandum or untitled report: RS, 3/13/1970 [BHS].

⁶³⁰ By comparison, Frederic Church employed a head farmer, who had at least three helpers. Typically, there was also a gardener.

⁶³¹ Memorandum: RS to Mark Lawton, 3/13/1970 [BHS].

⁶³² RS, “Report on Grounds Restoration at Olana,” 4/6/1971 [OSHS]. Quoted material in this discussion is from this report. The “Master Plan” was also mentioned in P. Stevenson, “Restoration Report for ‘Cosy

asserting that “only by restoring the grounds, where we know how it was, can we begin to appreciate this [i.e., landscape gardening] facet of FEC’s genius.” Slavin felt that after 2-1/2 years of study, the historic situation was clearer and actual restoration work could begin on a solid footing. Following up on his plans, Slavin had Bethune Road, Crown Hill Road, and two views -- from Crown Hill looking toward the House and from the south end of the Lake looking toward the House -- cleared. Selected clearing was also undertaken in the southwest corner of the park and along the steep slopes on the eastern side of the park. Selected trees were removed, and others trimmed to restore the view from the House.⁶³³ In addition to selected clearing, Slavin and Fromberger began to restore woodland vegetation along the north shore of the Lake, which had a turf shoreline after Louis and Sally Church removed the wooded edge before 1942.⁶³⁴ Slavin also had the overgrown cottage garden (east of Cosy Cottage), and the adjacent extant orchard, selectively cleared to reveal remnant fruit trees, vineyards and old fence lines. These were later mapped (fig. 71).⁶³⁵ These operations were done, as Slavin explained it, “to prevent it [i.e., former open areas] from becoming forested. The clearing of undergrowth at Olana is important if we are to restore Olana to its pre-1900 appearance.” In this report there was a hint of the flexibility needed to restore historic Picturesque landscape design effects. On clearing a historic view, Slavin said that, “because the original undergrowth is long since gone we have left small trees and shrubs that enhance the view. I feel that this is in keeping with FEC’s philosophy [i.e., landscape design approach].” By implication, Slavin suggested that subjective judgement -- made by those knowledgeable in the design approach employed by Church, and skilled in landscape management practices -- would be required to restore the landscape. While focusing on clearing formerly open areas, Slavin insisted that new tree plantings were also “vital” and foresaw it becoming a part of annual maintenance. In 1973, at least fourteen new trees were planted along the roads in the park.⁶³⁶

As noted above, Slavin did not feel he had sufficient staff or resources to proceed with an aggressive landscape restoration agenda. Still, Olana’s three person crew achieved considerable restoration work during the period 1970 through 1975; after which budget cuts necessitated retrenchment and a near total focus on the House ground. In 1972, Slavin

Cottage,” 1972, preface [OSHS]. Again, there was no formal, written master plan prepared as part of the early effort.

⁶³³ Memorandum: ARF to RS, 2/28/1973 [BHS].

⁶³⁴ The return of second-growth vegetation in this area is shown on postcards dated 1976 [BHS], and on the 1980 aerial photograph (fig. 70).

⁶³⁵ Sketch plans entitled, “Remnants of Church Orchard at Olana, 1975,” NYSOPRHP (David Spier), not dated: 1975 [OSHS].

⁶³⁶ Memorandum: RS to JGW, 2/5/1974 [BHS].

noted that “a grounds restoration report is still in the process of research,” and asked for monies for annual flowers for the restoration of the mingled garden, called then the “Victorian Garden.”⁶³⁷ This project was begun in 1970, reported in several newspaper articles.⁶³⁸ In 1971 Slavin concluded that the 20th-century flower garden dated to 1929,⁶³⁹ and that it should be removed in favor of authentic restoration of the flower garden maintained in Frederic Church’s lifetime. The restoration of Church’s so-called mingled garden was a focus of the landscape activities in the mid-1970s.⁶⁴⁰ Actual replanting was most active in the 1973-74 season when a “Report on the Restoration of the Victorian Garden of Olana ” was prepared. One volunteer, Ruth Dufault, took the lead by obtaining a small grant that allowed time to draw up a list of plants thought to be sympathetic with the 19th-century date of this garden.⁶⁴¹ In 1976, a detailed planting plan for the garden was completed.⁶⁴² In selecting the plants, it does not seem that the documentation cited in this Historic Landscape Report, now thought to partially identify the initial planting of this garden, had been uncovered and/or was recognized at the time of the 1970s replanting. Of the 84 plants listed for use in the restoration, only lantana, salvia and centauria were included in the 20 or so perennial types identified in the orders from the period when this garden was first installed. This suggests that the restoration planning did not intend to include the historic selection, or that the documentation was not available or understood.⁶⁴³

In the early 1970s, Olana developed recreational activities which seemed suited to its physical assets and history. In these years, the State encouraged winter sports: “cross-country skiing, tobogganing, sledding and skating.”⁶⁴⁴ In the summer of 1976, almost 9,000 (perhaps the largest crowd ever to assemble at Olana) turned out for a “Victorian Day

⁶³⁷ RS, untitled status report, 7/10/1972 [BHS]. The name, “Victorian Garden,” continued to be used up to 1977 when it appeared in a booklet prepared to interpret the property (see note below), indicating that its use was habitual for several years. Richard Slavin began to use the term, “mingled garden,” in 1976, when preparing a presentation on the garden. Slavin felt the name better described this flower garden, distinguishing it from others dated to the Victorian period - RS, “Editorial Comments . . .,” 11/25/1996 [OSHS]. The name mingled garden has been used consistently since that time.

⁶³⁸ See: unidentified newspaper clippings, 7/31/1970; and unidentified newspaper clipping entitled: “Olana Garden Being Restored,” 3/30/1972 [OSHS].

⁶³⁹ Memorandum: RS to Roland A. Block, 9/9/1971 [BHS].

⁶⁴⁰ Articles: James Elliot Lindley “The Garden at Olana,” The Crayon, Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1971; and “Garden Restoration,” The Crayon, Vol. III, No. 1, June 1973 [OSHS].

⁶⁴¹ Letter: Ruth Tuoti Dufault to Ms. Nanine Bilski (America the Beautiful Fund in New York), 4/17/1974 [BHS].

⁶⁴² Memorandum (with attached plan and plant list): Ed Lynch to NJF, 8/26/1976 [BHS].

⁶⁴³ Ibid., Lynch asked: “Are we basing the arrangement of the flowers on Church’s notes, drawings, etc.?” Slavin comments that lists of plants ordered by Church, as well as “period plants,” were compiled but that difficulties in supply and the personal preferences of staff and volunteers resulted in much substitution over the years - RS, “Editorial Comments . . .,” 11/25/1996 [OSHS].

⁶⁴⁴ News release: LMCL, 12/1976 [BHS].

Picnic ” with food, music and events⁶⁴⁵ that continued on a yearly basis into the 1980s. Other activities included a “Kite festival,⁶⁴⁶ art shows,⁶⁴⁷ and concerts.⁶⁴⁸ Regional staff initiated the introduction of some “State park” improvements. In 1976, picnic areas were laid out , complete with mounted grills, on the east side of the Lake.⁶⁴⁹ A small parking lot was installed directly beside the Lake and there was a proposal (not implemented) to enlarge this with a lot for 20 cars to be built along the driveway leading to Cosy Cottage.⁶⁵⁰ In 1979, a smaller parking area was constructed along the lower Farm Road between the site of the granary and the farm Stable,⁶⁵¹ and the lot close to the Lake was removed. Elsewhere, an elaborate wood boardwalk was installed through a bit of wetland along Crown Hill Road. It allowed pedestrians to leave the road and make a short cut through the swampy ground -- perhaps viewing a turtle along the way. Brochures were prepared by the State that emphasized the native flora and fauna to be found on the property.⁶⁵² While a consistent vision for the landscape awaited clearer understanding of its history and significance, the site was interpreted as a nature preserve and only incidentally, and generally, as integral to Frederic Church’s home and artistic vision.

The often conflicting preservation goals for Olana were aggravated by a fragmented administration. The site manager, who was responsible for maintaining Olana’s integrity, often quarreled with regional officialdom over ways to proceed. The Bureau of Historic Site personnel at Peebles Island -- who were knowledgeable experts and archaeologists intent on set procedures and documentation -- sometimes disagreed with those at Taconic Region who as park managers had a relative disregard for such matters. With the site caught in the middle, a sense of frustration was regularly expressed by Slavin, and the records add up to a lot of discussion without comparable levels of accomplishments. Despite individual good will and competence, the system and its funding seem designed for mediocre results. The Olana landscape shows the results of this ineffectual management to the present day.

In 1972, the New York State Historic Trust was abolished and in the next year Olana came under the administration of the Division for Historic Preservation, later to

⁶⁴⁵ Newspaper clipping, The Register-Star, 8/23/1976.

⁶⁴⁶ Letter: LMcL to Frederick Rath, 9/18/1975 [BHS].

⁶⁴⁷ Newspaper clipping: The Register-Star, 7/12/1976.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 9/8/1980.

⁶⁴⁹ Memorandum: Harry J. Lynch to NJF, 6/16/1976; and NJF to PRH, 8/31/1976 [BHS].

⁶⁵⁰ Plan entitled: “Proposed Picnic Area & Related Facilities,” by H. J. Lynch, 6/16/1976 [OSHS].

⁶⁵¹ Memorandum: NJF to PRH, 3/16/1979 [BHS].

⁶⁵² Four separate booklets were prepared, The Lake Trail [including Crown Hill Road], The Hemlock Trail [i.e., North Road], Ridge Road and the Victorian Garden [i.e., mingled garden], published by OPRHP in 1977.

evolve as the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Day-to-day operations remained the responsibility of Taconic Region.

The historic landscape restoration agenda was again confirmed in an undated memorandum from site manager Richard Slavin, drafted at about this time.⁶⁵³ While modest, this document constituted the most comprehensive and formal written statement of goals and implementation strategy yet prepared for the Olana landscape. Slavin began by dividing the property into nine “zones;” and suggested the following activities in each area (breakdown here is by current divisions).

House Environs:

- Replanting of the turn-around circle with castor bean (Ricinus borboniensis) and other exotics, in scheme that Slavin thought dated to Church’s lifetime and which was interpreted as “Victorian” i.e., 19th century.
- Installation of a rustic fence along the turn-around wall.
- Removal of the 20th century flower garden, the concrete and brick remnants of which remained on the East Lawn.
- Plant with bulbs, “naturalized” areas (former woodland).
- Restore the so-called “Victorian Flower Garden” (i.e., the mingled garden).

park:

- Clearing rampant lilac shrub growth that had become a near-monolithic stand in the wooded edge south of the House.
- Plant new trees, including paper birch, maples and spruce trees in the area of the New Approach Road.
- Replant the rest of the park after a complete inventory and further research.
- Clear understory scrub growth that had gone wild, as in the southwest corner and along the steep slopes on the east side of the park.

Lake:

- Clear understory vegetation from “picnic point” (west side of the Lake).⁶⁵⁴
- Restock the Lake with fish (preserve as a water habitat).

⁶⁵³ Memorandum: by RS, “Brief Outline of research and Restoration of Olana Estate,” not dated (c. 1972) [OSHS]. With no documented recipient, the intended use of this memorandum is unclear.

⁶⁵⁴ This “point” was the land that extended out into the Lake on the west side. There is no reference to this name during the historic period before Church’s death, but it was mentioned as a venue for picnics during the Louis and Sally Church period.

Farm:

- Clear former open fields and pastures that were now overgrown.
- Clear second-growth vegetation in the former orchard area and inventory remnant fruit trees, fence lines and other artifacts.
- Reestablish the drain system.

Crown Hill:

- Reopen the road and maintain for hiking. Clear views from the summit.

Bethune Road:

- Reopen road and maintain for hiking and fire protection.

North Road:

- Maintain road for hiking.

While Slavin's plans were not based on scholarly landscape studies of the property, most of the ideas are self-evident and non-controversial. Importantly, they considered Olana holistically. One striking aspect of this comprehensive approach was a flurry of discussion and study of the farm, heretofore rarely mentioned. Early in 1969, an historian with the Office of State History made an evaluation of the farm, and the farm equipment was inventoried.⁶⁵⁵ This was part of the master planning effort underway at that time (see above). The farm was described in one letter as an "exciting project" to develop "a demonstrational living 19th-century farm."⁶⁵⁶ In 1968-69, consideration was given to leasing portions of the farm acreage for renewal as orchards, and the operation of a "fruit farm" at Olana.⁶⁵⁷ Interest in pursuing renewal of the farm quickly dissipated in the face of real financial constraints, but under Slavin the idea was not allowed to die completely. In the mid-1970s, another report elaborated on several of the earlier ideas.⁶⁵⁸ It was suggested, for example, that the Kitchen Garden be restored, with this later report asserting that it could be achieved "quite easily" and would be "an extraordinarily interesting part of an interpretive program for the farm complex." In 1974-75, there was additional activity,

⁶⁵⁵ Geoffrey N. Stein, "The Olana Farm - History and A Consideration of Historical Farming," 1/1969; and "List of Olana Farm Implements," 2/1969 [BHS].

⁶⁵⁶ Letter: ARF to Donald R. Rogers (Columbia County Cooperative Extension), not dated, c. 1969 [OSHS].

⁶⁵⁷ Letters: Roland A Block to WEW, 10/16/1969; and Mark Lawton to Roland A Block, 11/18/1969 [BHS].

⁶⁵⁸ Aileen Stevenson, "[Olana] Master Plan - Grounds" (handwritten draft), not dated, c. 1973 [OSHS]. Quoted material in this discussion is from this report.

with equipment donations said to be proceeding.⁶⁵⁹ A job description outlined the requirements for a “Historic farmer.”⁶⁶⁰ Albert Fromberger made notes when he attended an “Association of Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museum Conference,” in April 1975. That same year, a report on the farm soils was prepared with the help of the USDA Soil Conservation Service.⁶⁶¹ In 1976, there was another official push for farm renewal. A State funding request discussed a “mini-farm,” where there would be “live farm animals” and “demonstrations of vegetables grown, farming methods, tools and allied items relating to the agricultural economy of [Church’s] time.” In support of this project, the site boldly requested the State hire a “Head Farmer.”⁶⁶²

Also in 1975, early concerns were expressed for the Lake, which was showing adverse effect from the rampant growth of aquatic plants extending out into open water. Prior to this, the Lake had been successfully managed as a fishery.⁶⁶³ Referring to a “Biological and Physical Survey” of the Lake, dated 1973,⁶⁶⁴ Albert Fromberger wrote a memorandum⁶⁶⁵ that discussed the “algae causing concern . . . filamentous species [of] Ulothrix.” Other problem plants were “rooted” (i.e. emergent) varieties. These were identified as “water weed” (Elodea canadensis), “pond weed - (Potamogeton zosteriformis and Potamogeton sp.), and muskgrass (Chara sp..” The water weed was said to be “extremely abundant.”⁶⁶⁶ Fromberger recommended that the Lake “be cleaned utilizing a mechanical cleaning apparatus.” The difficulty was directly related to the shrinking water depth caused by muck build up. Soundings done in conjunction with the 1973 survey show that the water depth varied from about 2-1/2 feet in the southern end, to 3-1/2 feet in the widest portion, with a maximum of 5 feet near the northern end. Water depths were

⁶⁵⁹ Memorandum: ARF to LMcL, 8/8/1975 [BHS].

⁶⁶⁰ Memorandum: LMcL to NJF, not dated, c. 1975 [BHS].

⁶⁶¹ James R. Calhoun (District Conservationist), “Soil and Water Conservation Plan,” , USDA, 12/2/1975.

⁶⁶² LMcL, “Explanation of Items Requested,” Fiscal Year 1977-78 [BHS].

⁶⁶³ Letters: Roland A. Block to Russell D. Fieldhouse, 8/13/1970; and Wayne P. Elliot (NYS, Dept. of Environmental Conservation) to LMcL, 3/31/1977 [OSHS].

⁶⁶⁴ John S. Grim (aquatic biologist), “Lake Olana - Olana Historic Site, Biological & Physical Survey,” Taconic State Park Commission, 6/15/1973 [OSHS].

⁶⁶⁵ Memorandum: ARF to RS, 3/24/1975. Quoted material in this discussion is taken from this memorandum. The memorandum closed with the comment that the Lake was, “accessible to motor equipment. We can use the muck on our gardens,” suggesting that Fromberger was recommending dredging. Fromberger estimated that the area of the Lake was 8.09 acres. The source of this figure is unclear. Careful measurement from the 1967 survey map shows the water surface, at elevation 285 ft., to be about 10 acres.

⁶⁶⁶ These species can be identified in studies of the local wetland vegetation. See, for example: Eric Kiviat, Hudson River East Bank Natural Areas, Clermont to Norrie, Bard College and The Nature Conservancy, 1978.

reduced to less than 2 feet near the shorelines. An undated study done in 1980⁶⁶⁷ stated that the Lake “was almost completely covered with Ulothrix.” The reason for the algae problem was considered multifaceted; the shallowness of the water being only one contributing factor. The report suggested the use of an algaecide but also concluded that dredging was the only long-term solution. In 1981, a partial dredging operation was undertaken that removed about 3,500 cubic yards in a .69 acre area at the northeast corner of the Lake.⁶⁶⁸

During the 1970s, when the mingled garden was being actively renewed, the post-Frederic Church, 20th-century flower garden was slowly being removed from the East Lawn. In 1973, Slavin received approval to demolish a part of this garden, which was said to be “inconsistent with the 19th-century restoration period.”⁶⁶⁹ While much of the garden was promptly documented and dismantled, remnants remained in the 1980s, when a series of memorandums over a six-year period document an anguished debate over the pros and cons of this final removal; a debate seemingly oblivious to a consistent application of Olana’s long-established restoration philosophy of returning, wherever possible, to the documented situation in Church’s lifetime.⁶⁷⁰

As part of the extensive tree work that took place in the 1970s, David Spier, a State employed arborist, recorded and inventoried many existing trees (fig. 71). One old pine tree, removed after a storm, was recorded as dating to 1783, and it was deemed the oldest tree on the property.⁶⁷¹

1975 marked the end of the first decade of State stewardship. In that year, Richard Slavin resigned the position of site manager and was replaced by an acting manager, Linda McLean. A year later, Albert Fromberger, who had worked closely with Slavin and is remembered for his devotion to the property, also resigned.⁶⁷²

Still, with new personnel, stewardship went on with renewed vigor. In 1976, McLean enthusiastically submitted a budget request that included an upbeat and detailed

⁶⁶⁷ “Olana Pond: Management Options,” no author, not dated, pp. 7-9 [OSHS]. Quoted material in this discussion is from this source.

⁶⁶⁸ Memorandum: KL to PRH, 4/28/1981; PRH to KL, 4/29/1981; and KL to PRH, 6/8/1981 [BHS]. Despite suggestions that the spoil be pumped out, spread on the existing farm fields and tilled into the surface, the project used bulldozers and stockpiled the spoil in an adjacent field, where it remains today.

⁶⁶⁹ Memorandum: Frederick Cawley (Division of Historic Preservation) to RS, 7/31/1973 [OSHS].

⁶⁷⁰ Memorandums: Thomas Ciampa (landscape architect, BHS, hereafter cited as TC) to JAR, 3/14/1980; JAR to NJF and KL, 2/17/1981; Wally Workmaster (hereafter cited as WW) to JAR, 11/15/1982; “Archaeology” [unsigned] to WW, 4/11/1983; JAR to John Lovell, 8/28/1986 [BHS].

⁶⁷¹ “Olana Landscape,” List of files, 2/7/1978 [BHS]. This list was apparently compiled under either site manager Linda McLean or Alan Dages. The location of this tree is not recorded.

⁶⁷² Newspaper clipping: The Register-Star, 9/24/1976. In this report, Fromberger was said to have “worked on the maintenance of grounds and facilities, supervising landscaping restoration projects designed to return the grounds to the way they looked when Frederic E. Church was alive.”

explanation of Olana's landscape restoration goals and needs.⁶⁷³ Unbowed, the narrative recommended that several additional grounds staff be hired. McLean specified her request for a "Park and Parkway Foreman," two "Groundsman" and a grounds security person who would patrol and offer interpretive information. McLean also requested a plan for ongoing tree replacement, stating that "every year we are losing three or four trees to old age and disease [and these needed replanting]." There were funds requested for the restoration of the Greenhouse, to be used as a backup for the maintenance of the "Victorian Garden" (i.e., mingled garden). Funds were requested to study other aspects of the property -- the "stable," for use as "a temporary orientation center until the time a visitor center [can] be decided upon;" Cosy Cottage, "for use as an exhibition building to explain the history of the estate and the farm;" the Lake, which was said to be "settling in - needs dredging." In summary, McLean noted that Olana was a "total creation of man [i.e., Church] the carefully contrived creation of field, forest, lake, drives and lawns is historically as important as the construction of [the House] . . . Olana remains today of utmost importance to the study of landscaping in America."

In 1977, Alan E. Dages was appointed site manager and served a one-year tenure.⁶⁷⁴ In 1978 the prominent viewshed from Olana to the southwest was threatened with construction of a nuclear power plant, to be located at Cementon, on the west side of Inbocht Bay. After at times bizarre debate -- one "expert witness" testified at a public hearing that he believed Frederic Church had only incidental interest in the views from Olana -- the plan was shelved.⁶⁷⁵ But other threats to the Olana viewshed remained.

In 1979, James A. Ryan was appointed site manager and his leadership continues to the present time. An aerial photograph (fig. 70) documents the property's condition at the start of Ryan's administration. A conservation plan was prepared in draft form in 1980.⁶⁷⁶ While the Taconic Region⁶⁷⁷ and the site were involved, the plan was not implemented. Limited resources required hard choices and the House and collections remained priorities for Ryan, even while there were continued initiatives to have the landscape adequately studied. The idea of preparing a "Historic Landscape Report" first surfaced in 1978, but progress was slow.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷³ LMcL, "Explanation of Items Requested," Fiscal Year 1977-78 [BHS]. Quoted material in this discussion is from McLean's narrative.

⁶⁷⁴ Letter: Alan E. Dages to NJF, 12/26/1978 [BHS].

⁶⁷⁵ Memorandum (with attached newspaper clipping): Larry E. Gobrecht to file, 5/2/1978 [BHS].

⁶⁷⁶ James R. Calhoun, District Conservationist, USDA, 2/25/1980 [OSHS].

⁶⁷⁷ Memorandum : KL to Olana Landscape File, 2/20/1980 [OSHS].

⁶⁷⁸ Memorandum: TC to NJF, 1/26/1978 [BHS]; and KL to Alan E. Dages, 2/22/1978 [BHS]. The second memorandum accompanied a detailed ten-page outline for an "Olana Landscape Report," dated 2/16/1978. The report was to have been researched and written by site and Taconic Region staff. When

In 1982, James Ryan prepared an interpretive narrative on the historic landscape⁶⁷⁹ and also began a comprehensive master plan for the property, completed in 1984. This is the most formal plan yet adapted for the site's management, said to have been of, "a format established by the State."⁶⁸⁰ The 1984 Master Plan confirmed the status of the property:

[an] estate as a single work of art, created and integrated in all its parts - views, landscape, buildings, decorations and furnishings - by a master artist . . . the purpose of all activity at Olana has been the restoration of the house and estate to its appearance during the lifetime of its creator.

Church's landscape design is described in the 1984 Master Plan as of a "Picturesque" style, and there is a comment that "the Olana archives have the documents needed to restore the grounds of Olana to the look intended by Church."

Recommendations included in Section VIII of the Master Plan focused on the House and collections care. While a comprehensive discussion of the estate and landscape was included, the approach was to complete the projects already started and to stabilize threatened elements. Retrenchment was evident. There was, for example, a suggestion that the agricultural implements and vehicles collected in the 1970s be adequately stored. Cosy Cottage was recommended for rehabilitation as a residence for a "visiting scholar," rather than an essential as part of Olana's interpretation. Under the heading of "Grounds" there was mention of a "landscape survey" then underway. This was a reference to a "Historic Landscape Report," completed the same year as the Master Plan. The 1984 Master Plan called the landscape report a "first step" and recommended that a "Grounds Restoration Report" be prepared as a follow-up.⁶⁸¹

The 1984 Historic Landscape Report, commissioned by the Bureau of Historic Sites and completed by the author,⁶⁸² can be described as yet another preliminary study. Its contribution included the preparation of an existing conditions plan and a narrative that focused on articulating the significance of the landscape as a work of landscape gardening, allowing the property to be discussed in a national and international context. There was also a discussion of the type and adequacy of the documentation and a breakdown of the

this effort did not proceed, the Bureau of Historic Sites applied for monies to hire a consultant to undertake the work - see, grant application, dated: 6/26/1980 [OSHS]. That initiative was apparently not successful.

⁶⁷⁹ JAR, "Frederic Edwin Church's Harmonious Work of Art, Landscape Design at Olana State Historic Site," unpublished manuscript, 2/1/1982 [OSHS].

⁶⁸⁰ JAR, "The Olana Master Plan," 1984 [OSHS]. Quoted material in the discussion of this plan is from this source.

⁶⁸¹ The 1984 Master Plan was subsequently re-formatted as the "Structures and Land-Use Statement, Olana State Historic Site," prepared by JAR, 9/22/1986, which was expanded and updated by Deborah S. Gordon, 7/1995 [OSHS].

⁶⁸² RMT, "Olana Historic Landscape Report (Phase I)," BHS, 7/31/1984 [OSHS].

site's basic components. Most important, this report initiated a process that made consistent progress, albeit over twelve years, toward the completion of the present Historic Landscape Report. After the initial report, The Friends of Olana followed-up by funding a two-year research project in the Olana archives that compiled information relevant to the historic landscape studies.⁶⁸³ In 1986, a "Landscape Research Report" summarized the investigations and answered some of the crucial questions raised in the earlier landscape report.⁶⁸⁴

On the grounds, landscape maintenance slackened further as the 1980s progressed. On October 4, 1987, a freak snow storm devastated trees still in leaf. Numerous trees were toppled while others were mutilated with extensive broken limbs, leaving a maimed and battered woodland over much of the site. In the years previous, insect damage, including several years of Gypsy moth infestation, necessitated the removal of several hundred trees, notably hemlocks.⁶⁸⁵ With inadequate staff and funding, the State was reduced to using a bulldozer to aid in clearing debris, a practice that caused collateral damage to Olana's woodlands.

Close to the House, the goal of restoring important aspects of the landscape led to the preparation of a landscape restoration plan in 1988.⁶⁸⁶ The plan provided a detailed existing conditions map for this highly visited area (fig. 72) and analyzed aspects of the landscape to formulate restoration/rehabilitation proposals (fig. 73). These included renewed calls for removal of the modern brick walk and construction of a new stairway from the parking lot to the final approach driveway that would avoid directly entering the Stable yard. The plan also identified trees that would be replanted where known specimens had existed previously and put forward a planting plan designed to enhance screening of the Stable yard and service area. Some of the individual trees identified in this plan have been replaced since an Arbor Day celebration was initiated in 1990. The plan suggested that a rustic-style railing (fig. 91) and rustic seats (fig. 85), of a design sketched by Church, be reconstructed. In the intervening eight years, this restoration plan has been

⁶⁸³ EMcL, "Historic Landscape Research Project (Phase II)," Friends of Olana, 3/1985 [OSHS]. This research project was commenced in March 1985.

⁶⁸⁴ EMcL, "Landscape Research Report (Phase III)," BHS, 8/1986 [OSHS].

⁶⁸⁵ Memorandum: KL to WW, et al., 7/16/1983 [OSHS]. Lutters stated that while hemlocks dominated the woods before the Gypsy moth infestation (being 63 % of the trees surveyed), they were reduced to only 7% after the removal of dead trees. See, plan entitled: "Tree Removal & Replacement," scale: 1"=50', 8/1/1983 [OSHS].

⁶⁸⁶ RMT and EMcL, "Master Landscape Restoration Plan - Mansion [i.e., House] Environs (Phase IV, Part 1), BHS, 7/15/1988 [OSHS].

slowly implemented. Also in 1988, the first proposals to bury electric lines on the property was made.⁶⁸⁷

In 1990, a restoration plan was prepared for the renewal of the park (fig. 74).⁶⁸⁸ In 1991, a similar plan was prepared for the severely damaged woodland setting along the North Road (fig. 75).⁶⁸⁹ With the completion of these studies it became obvious that substantial landscape restoration would be required to return Olana to its historic condition. The management of woodlands, a complex park, an extensive carriage drive system and innumerable views -- all as created and maintained by the artistic eye of Frederic Church -- was an agenda increasingly seen as daunting, challenging the imagination and one's sense of realistic expectations. As if to emphasize the scope of the undertaking, a preliminary study of the Olana farm was prepared in 1993.⁶⁹⁰ This study outlined the components and use of Frederic Church's agricultural acreage, establishing a framework for considering its future. It was clear from the report that this aspect of Olana's restoration would require substantial funding and ongoing expert management, even while the review of documentation reiterated the importance of the farm and farm life to Olana's significance.

In 1991, the Stable was rehabilitated as a visitors center, a move considered temporary until an independent facility can be constructed, as always intended, on the State-owned land on the west side of Route 9G. In the interim, the new Visitors Center at the Stable includes interpretation of the property as a designed landscape. In this period, the Friends of Olana also sponsored the preparation of a brochure interpreting the landscape for interested visitors.⁶⁹¹

In the past five years, there has been broad consensus that the eventual restoration of Olana includes the landscape as a fundamental element. There is today a landscape and viewshed committee representing these goals in the Friends of Olana. A State sponsored "Olana Colloquium" was held in November 1992.⁶⁹² After this two-day session, an Olana Team was established, made up of State personnel responsible for the various aspects of the site's operation, including the landscape. The Olana Team has met regularly since

⁶⁸⁷ Memorandum: KL to JAR, 4/16/1988 [OSHS].

⁶⁸⁸ RMT, Master Landscape Restoration Plan - South Park (Phase IV, Part 2)," Friends of Olana, 3/15/1990 [OSHS].

⁶⁸⁹ RMT, "Master Landscape Restoration Plan - North Road (Phase IV, Part 3)," BHS and Friends of Olana, 5/15/1991 [OSHS].

⁶⁹⁰ RMT, "Preliminary Historic Landscape Study - The Farm," BHS, 4/15/1993 [OSHS].

⁶⁹¹ "The Landscape Garden at Olana State Historic Site - A Guide to the Landscape," Friends of Olana, 1989 [OSHS].

⁶⁹² Memorandums: DW to Olana Colloquium participants, 9/21/1992 and 12/18/1992 [OSHS]. This colloquium was held at Olana on November 18-19, 1992.

1993. Another colloquium, entitled “Olana in the 21st Century,”⁶⁹³ was convened by the Friends of Olana in September, 1995. Participants from the world of museum administration and collections care, together with State and Friends representatives, gathered to discuss Olana’s significance and options for its future. Again, the landscape was prominently mentioned for its unique significance and as an essential focus for future presentation of the property.⁶⁹⁴

In articulating a vision for Olana in the 21st century, the State’s severely limited ability to provide adequate stewardship must be overcome. From the perspective of State management, a fully comprehensive restoration of Olana seems hopelessly farfetched, so much so that there is reluctance to even plan for restoration that cannot be implemented in the short term. Changes in State administration have and will hamper further attempts at long-range planning and consistent implementation. In this context, visions are reduced to crisis management and essential short-term goals. Long-range projects, such as returning the farm to a semblance of its earlier appearance and use; arranging for public access that allows removal of the modern asphalt road system, or implementing long-term arboreal care, are beyond realistic consideration. Current first-priority issues are related to such highly visible problems as dredging the Lake, essential stabilization at Cosy Cottage, and ongoing crucial restoration at the House involving such basics as repairing roof leaks and applying base paint to presently exposed wood trim. When added to regular operations, these few and essential projects exhaust available State resources.

In its day-to-day operations, Olana has a building and grounds superintendent, with an occasional part-time assistant and a seasonal helper who looks after the mingled garden. Occasionally, Taconic Region restoration crew undertake landscape projects, such as clearing downed wood along the North Road in 1992, building the new staircase from the parking lot in 1994-95, and re-roofing Cosy Cottage in the autumn of 1996.

Still, the State’s current level of expenditure and staff efforts are generally agreed to be inadequate to continue even essential landscape maintenance, let alone comprehensive restoration. Examples of decline are easy to spot. The paved roads are severely broken-up in some areas. Downed and dead trees often wait several seasons before they are cleared. The historic carriage drives are periodically blocked with downed wood and accumulated leaves have clogged culverts and made portions of the roads nearly impassible. Collapsed dry-laid, stone retaining walls can be seen in several locations. Eroded gullies are seldom repaired. Deterioration of the remaining farm buildings continues, largely unchecked. In

⁶⁹³ See: “Background paper for: Olana in the 21st Century - A Colloquium on the Future of the Olana State Historic Site” (held 9/29-30/ 1995) [OSHS]. See also, note #8.

⁶⁹⁴ See: “Transcript of Olana Colloquium (i.e., “Olana in the 21st Century”), 9/30/1995 [OSHS].

formerly open fields, century-old oaks that were once features are today threatened by the invasive growth of weed trees (fig. 103). Elsewhere, trees that Church knew have disappeared without record and, except near the House, without replacement. With even basic needs unmet, the ornamental effects intended by Frederic Church have been ignored, and so these aspects of the landscape contribute little to interpreting Church's art or his life at Olana. In turn, the visual quality issues implicit in Church's work cannot be communicated to the public. Today, important views have been lost, including those along the Ridge Road where Frederic Church exclaimed his success at creating "more and better landscapes" than was possible through his painterly efforts. In turn, the history of landscape gardening in America, and its notable achievements in the Hudson River Valley, are left forgotten at one of the finest and most significant examples of this art form in the USA.

Instead, presented with a derelict landscape, very few visitors are willing to venture beyond the House grounds. Given the situation today, anyone who did walk to see Cosy Cottage and the farm; to take in the view from Crown Hill or the Ridge Road, or to visit the old North Entrance, would be confronted with an abandoned, remnant landscape and a great deal of confusion in interpreting Church's design. In 1996, Olana's acreage is preserved, but the landscape does not accurately or effectively reflect the historic character of the property as it was in Frederic Church's lifetime.

SECTION V - EXISTING CONDITIONS

The art of the Picturesque . . . was so vulnerable to decay that only painters could freeze it for posterity.

- Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe, The Landscape of Man, 1975 ⁶⁹⁵

General Notes:

The discussion of existing conditions presented in this section is illustrated on the “Existing Conditions Plan, 1996,” original scale: 1”=50’ (fig. 116). The existing conditions are described as the situation at the Olana State Historic Site in the summer of 1996, as these conditions relate to Olana as it was late in Frederic Church’s residence in the period from 1891 to 1900. The narrative breaks down Olana into separate areas, the same division used to describe the landscape at the end of Frederic Church’s lifetime in Section III - Design Description. In this way, the existing conditions in 1996 can be readily compared to the historic situation in the:

1. House environs
2. Lake and park
3. Bethune Road / South Road / New Approach Road
4. North Road
5. Ridge Road / Crown Hill Road
6. Farm

References in the narrative to “historic,” as in “historic period,” “historic situation,” or “historic appearance” and to “Church’s period” and “Church’s lifetime,” refer to the last years of Church’s residency at Olana, 1891 through 1900.

Source material used in the preparation of the Existing Conditions Plan includes the 1967 boundary and topographic survey maps of the property (figs. 2 and 115). In 1984, these survey maps were used to prepare a comprehensive Existing Conditions Plan.⁶⁹⁶ Now, twelve years after its first delineation, the 1984 Existing Conditions Plan has been updated and supplemented by additional field work to record measurements, plant material identification and the current status of such important landscape conditions as surface characteristics, features and incidental details. The field work was compiled from on-site investigations in the spring, summer and autumn of 1996. The existing conditions are also illustrated with 31 photographs taken in May 1996 (figs. 84 to 114).

⁶⁹⁵ Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe, The Landscape of Man, New York, NY: VanNostrand Reinhold Co., 1975, p. 233. This history of landscape design includes a good and concise discussion of the English landscape garden, pp. 232-247.

⁶⁹⁶ Map entitled: “[Olana] Existing Conditions - 1984” (scale: 1”=50’), by RMT, 7/1/1984 [OSHS].

1. House environs

The House was not substantially altered after Church's death and has been maintained and partially restored during the years of State stewardship.⁶⁹⁷ The exterior of the House is essentially as Church last saw it (fig. 88), although much of the exterior trim painting has been neglected. There have been a few alterations to the exterior rooms, i.e., entrance porch, ombra and piazza (veranda), as detailed elsewhere.⁶⁹⁸ The basement area below the piazza (veranda), open in Frederic Church's lifetime, was enclosed by Louis Church, a situation that remains today. On the north side of the House, brick paving was added after 1900, and this remains, serving as a handicap parking area.

As with the House itself, the House grounds appear today much as Church knew them. The lawn terraces south of the House are well preserved despite heavy use by the visiting public that requires careful maintenance of the lawn surface. An ad hoc and very intrusive arrangement of lawn sprinklers and connecting hoses has been installed to aid irrigation. The contraption detracts from the historic integrity of the terraces.

From this turf overlook, and from within the House, the south, southwest and west panoramic views remain essentially as Church knew them (fig. 93). In the winter of 1992-93, extensive removal of tall, spindly maple trees on the steep ground below the terraces opened views in the previously screened, middle ground. With the eye again able to plunge from this height (rather than be confined to the distant horizon by tall vegetation), much of the drama of the view has been restored. Today, the scene along the Hudson River's eastern shoreline -- including the Livingston estate, Oak Hill, and adjacent orchards and farmland, is again visible. Fortunately, the Rip Van Winkle Bridge was located far enough to the north to be easily excluded from the primary south and southwest prospects. The bridge has been judiciously left screened by a mature white birch tree and backing vegetation. In the distance, modern intrusions can be seen, most notably industrial development in Greene County and three radio towers closer at hand south of Olana. Still, in its essence the qualities of the view continues to captivate in a variety of weather conditions.⁶⁹⁹ The "View from Olana" (as it has been called), is one of the finest in the

⁶⁹⁷ At the time of this report, work is about to start on a comprehensive Historic Structure Report for the House. This study is expected to require several years for completion.

⁶⁹⁸ Zukowski, "Furnishings Plan - Exterior Rooms," 1996 (draft) [OSHS].

⁶⁹⁹ Gerald L. Carr, Olana Landscapes, 1989. This book has many illustrations of the Olana landscape taken in the late 1980s.

Hudson River Valley. The image has appeared in numerous publications and in travel literature. The clearing project done in 1992-93 will need to be an ongoing maintenance priority at Olana, especially critical as seen from within the House where the viewpoint is set back from the vantage point provided on the lawn terraces. It is from the first-floor rooms that evaluations for ongoing view clearing should be made. The restoration process utilized in maintaining the panoramic views is similar to what will be required in restoring much of the organic visual effects known to have been prevalent throughout Olana during Church's lifetime.

The setting of the House is well preserved (figs. 86, 88 and 94). There has been the inevitable change in the immediate vegetation,⁷⁰⁰ but this has not altered the essential historic character. The large trees close to the House are especially important. Two large chestnut oaks flank the southeast view coming toward the House on the final approach drive (fig. 88). An old ironwood tree (*Carpinus caroliniana*) dominates the lawn at the northeast corner of the House. This tree has experienced considerable die-back in the past several years. A small ironwood sapling was recently planted close to this tree and may eventually replace it. Other large trees encircle the East Lawn, defining its spatial form. Large trees, again mostly chestnut oaks, were clustered around the Stable yard and service area, and these are today reduced in numbers from the situation in Church's lifetime. To some extent, the maturity of many of the trees that remain compensates for the reduced numbers and results in an overstory of foliage that compliments the effect intended by Church.⁷⁰¹ Recently, several red oaks have been planted to replace earlier trees that are now missing.

The architectural details that contributed so importantly to the distinction of the House, for example the polychromatic trim motifs, the intricate woodwork, the awnings over the windows, and other furnishings, have not been kept in optimum condition, so that on close inspection the House exterior has a somewhat neglected appearance. Conspicuously absent are the vines that once covered portions of the masonry walls. The vines were removed to provide optimum conditions for masonry and wood conservation on the House exterior.⁷⁰² As in Church's lifetime, there are no shrubs or massed flowers in proximity to the House, which stands austerely on its earthen pedestal, framed majestically by large trees whose stature compliments the architectural forms.

⁷⁰⁰ RMT and EMcL, "Master Landscape Restoration Plan - The Mansion Environs," BHS, 1988; with attached Existing Conditions Plan (scale: 1"=20'), dated: 7/5/1988 [OSHS] (fig. 72).

⁷⁰¹ Many of the older, taller specimens in Church's period have now disappeared, but in general the wooded areas around the House are taller now than in the 19th century.

⁷⁰² Memorandums: James Gold to JAR et al., 7/14/1983; and TC to JAR, 10/15/1984 [OSHS].

The East Lawn and the semi-circular final approach drive are also preserved in a way reflective of the historic period. After removal of the 20th-century flower garden, and the brick/granite pedestrian walk installed in the 1960s by New York State, the East Lawn once again serves as the simple foil for arrival views toward the House (fig. 86). In the southeast portion of the lawn, the massed shrubbery, dominated by large spreading yews, is overgrown. The shrub mass has encroached onto the driveway, narrowing the passage so that carriages would have difficulty passing -- certainly not the situation maintained in Church's lifetime. In turn, the visual effect is constricted (fig. 87). A modern fire hydrant on the north side of the Lawn is painted red, serving as an anachronistic feature (fig. 85). New trees added as Arbor Day plantings in recent years have replaced some of the missing trees seen in photographs. The new plantings provide a pleasing sense of renewal that presents landscape restoration as an ongoing activity. The driveway itself, and all the surfaces around the House, are maintained using crushed shale that is similar to the material used in Church's lifetime. A warm, reddish brown color, this shale is fundamental to maintenance of a historically accurate and attractive appearance on Olana's roads. Some patches of crushed limestone can be detected, remnants of earlier applications made for purely functional reasons, without concern for an authentic historic appearance. In some areas the shale surface is poorly maintained. This is especially notable along the well-used primary paths taken by visitors. There, potholes and shale worn to mud underfoot remains unattended for long periods, contributing in a fundamental way to an untidy, messy appearance.

Along the final approach drive, distant views are restricted by mature trees as the drive sweeps out to the south. Today, the restored mingled garden (see below under discussion of the park) is often first seen from above, by visitors walking along the final approach drive. This is disjointed, because in the historic period perception of the mingled garden would have been principally from the New Approach Road -- the South Road after 1888 (see below), (fig. 89). In the final approach, the House is seen as a clear focus, as it was in Church's period (fig. 88). Full appreciation of the primary south panorama is held back until after the House is reached. This is thought to be sympathetic to the arrival sequence in Church's lifetime, although views outward from the final approach drive are not as open as in the historic situation.

Today, incidental anachronisms, such as small signs, State-issue sawhorses used as barriers, "temporary" metal and wooden posts installed during the winter to aid plowing, water irrigation hoses and fittings, and a white plastic chain (used to restrict pedestrian access onto the lawn terraces), detract from what was a highly-refined scene in the historic period. There is too often a shoddy, unkempt appearance in the House grounds.

North of the entrance porch is the carriage turn-around. This area has been restored in recent years (fig. 91). A rustic railing, constructed of mountain laurel, replicates the railing in place late in Church's lifetime (fig. 30). Roses (*Rosa rugosa*) have been planted in the center circle of the turn-around in the mistaken belief that these were documented in Church's lifetime.⁷⁰³

North of the House, close to the Stable yard and service area, woodland vegetation is somewhat sparse with large areas given over to empty mulch-surfaced beds. The few plants that have been added do not effectively screen views into the utility areas from the approach drive.⁷⁰⁴ The visual impact of these service areas is affected decisively by the current visitors' use of the property. Visitors circulate on foot from the parking lot at the top of the hill. This is not an orientation considered in Church's landscape design. Fortunately the parking lot is isolated and out-of-sight from the House grounds. From the lot, visitors descend a staircase which has no historical precedent, but leads to a point aligned on the final approach drive (fig. 85). From this point -- if the intent was to walk directly to the House -- one could continue straight ahead on the final approach drive and by following this route recreate the historic arrival experience. In reality however, nearly all visitors are drawn toward the visitors' facilities. Ticket sales, gift shop, water fountain and rest rooms are available in the Stable and this use draws traffic and determines circulation patterns without reference to the historic situation. As a result, the experience of visiting the House deviates fundamentally from the planned arrival sequence in Church's lifetime. As such, the interpretive tour is a jarring disorientation from the historic situation. After tickets are procured (where horses were once stabled), visitors undertaking tours of the House return to the final approach drive at the bottom of the parking lot staircase where these tours begin. Here they group around rustic benches of a design sketched by Church (fig. 85). The cluster of seats is incongruous, set in the middle of a driveway. From there, tour groups follow the circular route along the final approach drive to the entrance porch at the House.

In bad weather, visitors go directly from the Stable to the house entrance. Other visitors who may not be taking a House tour tends to move in the same pattern from the Stable (Visitors Center), through the service area, along the north and east sides of the

⁷⁰³ In a letter: LPC to ICC, 2/16/1896 [DHA], Louis Church mentioned "a new idea for that good for nothing round bed where nothing will grow," a reference perhaps to the turning circle. His suggestion was that a Clematis be planted in the round bed, but there is no evidence that this occurred. Roses were often discussed and purchased by Louis Church in the period 1891-1900, but there is no documentation of their presence in the turning circle during the historic period.

⁷⁰⁴ The necessity to screen the Stable yard and service area from the approach road was a problem for Frederic Church. It may have encouraged him to develop the New Approach Road which avoided service areas completely while still introducing views to the House from opposite the East Lawn.

House toward the principal viewpoint on the lawn terraces, usually returning along the same route, or perhaps moving to the mingled garden and back to the parking lot along the final approach drive. Today's visitor experience is disjointed, with the service areas north of the House (areas Frederic Church kept visitors away from), given focal attention as a point of visitor congregation (fig. 90). Aggravating this situation is the habitual presence of vehicles in the service area and Stable yard -- used for handicap parking and deliveries -- close to the administrative entrance at the House (historically a rear, service entrance).

2. Lake and park

While the Lake remains as configured by Church, the natural basin excavated of muck over decades has today silted-up so that in recent years aquatic vegetation has replaced open water in many areas (fig. 105). The rampant growth of vegetation and heavy rootstocks has further raised the levels of the Lake bottom. Beginning in the summer of 1996, a major dredging operation is being conducted that will return this important water feature to a viable condition.

The wooded ground around the Lake remains as intended. As a highly visible area, and an area used at times for picnicking, the Lake environs have been given maintenance attention over the years of State stewardship. The woods have been occasionally thinned and downed trees have been removed. As a result, the woods here are generally tidier than other woodland areas at Olana, and in this way may be more reflective of the historic situation than areas where maintenance has been severely neglected.

The carriage road that follows the east and south side of the Lake remains, and its rustic unimproved surface is reflective of the historic situation. Some views from this road across the Lake to the park and House remain, although none are consciously maintained and some of the more apparent prospects, as from the south end of the Lake, are severely restricted by encroaching vegetation. Portions of the road section around the Lake are retained by dry-laid stone walls in place during Church's lifetime. Today, these have collapsed in sections, with stones having tumbled down the steep slope, some into the Lake.

Today, the park is preserved and most of the formerly open ground remains open. Still, the park is an altered landscape that includes elements of the historic situation

intertwined with notable changes that have accumulated since Church's lifetime.⁷⁰⁵ The park does retain its important historical purpose. In fact, for most visitors it is the sole attraction beyond the House grounds. All visitors to Olana pass through the park on their way to and from the House and most experience views over the park from the lawn terraces on the south side of the House, as was the case in the 19th century. The roads that pass through the park are discussed in the next subsection.

Today, the demarcation of the park is altered in some areas from the situation in Church's lifetime, although generally the park's spatial definition is close to the historic situation. Alterations include the open field south of the lawn terraces, a critical area Church planted with trees, and allowed to return as second-growth late in his residency. Also changed is the east side of the park, bordering the lower Farm Road, which was historically more heavily wooded along the road edge than is the case today. Elsewhere, the western edge of the park follows the South Road, but the visual appearance of this wooded edge, as the foreground to the south and southwest views, has been depreciated by unchecked second-growth saplings and weed trees leaving older, more sculptural trees obscured in the massed vegetation. In this way, the important Quarry Hill land form, a feature in many of Church's paintings, is nearly indecipherable due to the dense woods of closely spaced, spindly second-growth along the wooded edges.

Within the park, the pattern and placement of tree plantings within the park is quite different from the historic arrangement (fig. 96). Clumps or thickets of trees (with understory vegetation intact) are reduced now to only one example. The placement of tree groves has also changed. Individual specimen trees are significantly reduced in number, and some new plantings, such as the long grove of pines on the west side of the modern entry road, have no historic precedence or association with the historic design. In turn, trees known to be present -- for example, the extensive groves of white birch along the New Approach Road or the specimen American elms, are not present. Today, only a few birch trees remain and there are no American elms.

The park was a mown meadow in Church's lifetime (fig. 35), but is today a less-monolithic turf with high percentages of invasive species. These include extensive areas of naturalized, yellow-flowering coreopsis, patches of lilac in the north corner just south of the House (reduced to a ground cover by frequent mowing), and extensive poison ivy that could seriously spoil an impromptu picnic in the wrong spot. These and other weedy

⁷⁰⁵ For a more detailed description of existing conditions in the park, see: RMT, "Master Landscape Restoration Plan - South Park," BHS, 1991; with attached Existing Conditions Plan (scale: 1"=50'), dated: 7/12/1989 (fig. 74).

plants would not have been numerous in the historic situation given Church's concern for a quality hay crop.

The only building thought to have been present in the park during the last decade of Church's lifetime was the enigmatic Summer House, identified on the 1886 Plan of Olana (fig. 22a) but otherwise undocumented. It is not extant.

The so-called mingled garden, restored as a flowering border in the 1970s, is maintained today and provides a blowsy profusion of varied leaf patterns and flower colors that is especially effective late in the summer. As intended, this garden is especially attractive seen from the New Approach Road (fig. 89). Today, considerable historical leeway is taken in selecting plantings for the beds. A cursory review in 1996 shows that only a few of the perennials and annuals thought to have been originally planted are included in the present garden. The substitute plants "mingle" in a way sympathetic with the rather haphazard effect thought to have been maintained there in Church's lifetime. The historic gates have been installed, although their present green color is thought to be at variance with the historic white color. Wire fencing used around the perimeter of the garden, and against the wall as supports for climbing vines, is somewhat dilapidated and unattractive in its patchwork, repaired condition.

3. Bethune Road / South Road / New Approach Road

The Bethune Road remains as in Church's lifetime. It is not open to vehicle traffic and is seldom used because it is a dead end -- leading to the bottom of the steep western slope and Route 9G. Just north of the Bethune Road, a wide swath of woodland is cleared as the route of the overhead electric wires that brings power from the trunk line on Rt. 9G to the House. This cleared swath of woodland is a focus of views for those crossing east-bound on the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, and a major visual intrusion in the Olana landscape.

Today, the South Road is replicated, without authenticity, by a paved asphalt road system that brings visitors from Rt. 9G to the House. The experience of travelling the South Road, the planned sequential approach to the House as intended by Frederic Church, has been significantly altered in the State scheme installed in the 1960s (fig. 95). Entering at the South Entrance (fig. 114), the dramatic cliff-like escarpment at Red Hill is today screened by weed trees so that its visual impact is masked. From this point, the South Road proceeds to, and then along, the Lake, following the historic alignment. However, the route detours onto the lower Farm Road and after skirting the north end of the Lake, ascends the hill on the modern 'up road', whose layout has no historical precedence. This

road is a wide (paved width of 20 feet+), one-way access. The alignment overlaps portions of the historic uphill Farm Road, leaving the original route undisturbed elsewhere. The modern, engineered appearance of the 'up road' is a jarring contrast to the intricate and dramatic historic alignment. The lower Farm Road, skirting the north side of the Lake, has also been widened and paved. The low-lying wet conditions have contributed to pavement deterioration and the road is broken up in this section. Along the Lake, this road follows the historic route, but as it approaches the five-point intersection the modern road curves uphill in a wide sweep. The earthwork required for the modern road obliterated the five-point intersection. This has been replaced with an awkward arrangement of gravel secondary roads adjacent to the paved route (fig. 97). The driveway to Cosy Cottage (fig. 101) and the Lake road are left unused, with modern State-issue sawhorses barring entry. In contrast, portions of the lower Farm Road that led to the Barn and other farm outbuildings now lead to a small parking lot located on the site of the wagon house (see below under subsection on the Farm). The present arrangement seriously detracts from the subtle layout of roads and intersections in Church's lifetime. In recent years, crushed-stone and a variety of barriers have been added to this area. A crushed-stone surface provides access to the Lake. The mix of surfaces and converging roads, and incidental appurtenances such as sawhorse barriers and small signs, leaves a cluttered and unattractive appearance at a location where many visitors might wish to park their cars and approach Cosy Cottage, the historic farmstead and the Lake.

Uphill, once the modern 'up road' returns to the alignment of the original South Road (near the site of the Greenhouse), the modern road continues as a two-way road (paved width of 25 feet+). After crossing the North Road, the paved road ascends to the summit of the hill terminating at the parking lot. Exiting the property reverses the sequence, except that on leaving circulation follows the old South Road as a one-way road downhill (paved width of 18 to 20 feet+). When the route reaches the intersection of the lower Farm Road, one-way exiting traffic is diverted onto a modern alignment that avoids the old South Road by following directly south toward the South Entrance (fig. 98). In both directions, moving to and from the House, the route and sequence are significantly different from the arrangement created by Frederic Church.

The New Approach Road, built by Church in the late 1880s and part of the South Road after that date, remains (figs. 89 and 95) but is abandoned. The route is not open to vehicle use and is not part of the arrival experience as it was intended to be late in Church's lifetime. Since the end of Sally Church's lifetime, the surface has not been maintained or resurfaced with shale, and so the adjoining turf has spread across the width of the road obscuring its historic importance (fig. 95). Today, the former approach is a barely

discernible path. The many distinctive white birch trees that are known to have been irregularly set out along this route are today reduced to a few remnants that do not reflect the historic appearance.

4. North Road

Today, the North Road is closed to vehicle access and can be experienced as the principal approach drive to the House only by recreating, imperfectly, the intended route on a walk. The experience is fragmented by the lopped-off historic North Entrance, now isolated and partially obliterated north of, and under, the modern alignment of Rt. 23 (fig. 113).

Where it remains, the historical authenticity and amenity of the North Road has been compromised by changes in the road's wooded setting. Portions of the woodland surrounding the North Road have been dramatically changed in recent years. In the uphill section especially, the woods have been seriously damaged by insect problems and storms.

This adverse situation was documented in a comprehensive inventory of the existing conditions carried out in 1991.⁷⁰⁶ In general, woodland areas along the North Road have been depleted of nearly half of their mature trees. The remaining stumps attest to this loss. Very few of the once dominant hemlocks remain. The largest remaining trees are oaks, many of which date to Church's lifetime. There are also a few older maples and numerous younger maples, many mutilated by storm damage. All this has left the formerly dense forest open and unattractive. Second-growth vegetation, including monolithic stands of black cherry, tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissimus*), and such weed species as brambles and wild flowers not seen in wooded areas, now dominate whole areas of formerly dense woodland. This situation is a major departure from the shady forest conditions known in Frederic Church's lifetime. Given its proximity to the House and its role as Olana's primary approach drive, the conditions in the North Road corridor detract importantly from the historic presentation of Church's designed landscape. The reforestation of this area is made difficult by the Olana deer population. New hemlock trees were planted in the area in 1995, but protective fencing proved inadequate and the plantings were destroyed by browsing deer.

⁷⁰⁶ RMT, "Master Restoration Plan - North Road," BHS, 1991; with attached Existing Conditions Plan (scale: 1"=100' and 1"=50'), dated: 5/15/1991 (fig. 75).

The North Road corridor is also adversely impacted by an overhead electric line that links the primary electric service at the House with Cosy Cottage and the pump house. The poles and lines extend up the slope in a broad swath south of the North Road. This overhead utility is a historical anachronism, and the cleared right-of-way restricts the return of woodland conditions, leaving only brambles and second-growth saplings to appear in this critical landscape area. On the south side of the electric line, a path exists in the woods that links the House with the farm. This path was apparently used to bring milk from the farm to the House and is probably of 20th-century origin, although it may have been used during Frederic Church's lifetime. There is considerable downed wood in this area, which was not cleared after the insect and storm damage of the 1980s.

As shown on the Existing Conditions Plan, only the area in the northwest corner of the wooded hillside retains a mix of vegetation that resembles the woodland before the recent setbacks. The area has a full complement of hemlocks, including numerous saplings, moderate sized trees and a few older specimens. These are interspersed with red, white and chestnut oaks, sugar maples, black cherry, white pines and a few white birch. There is even a variety of understory vegetation, and woods have an unblemished, attractive look that is unfortunately lacking in other areas of the North Road corridor. Today, this area represents a model for future renewal.

The North Road itself receives little maintenance and is in areas somewhat eroded, a condition caused by debris that has clogged culverts and drainage swales.

5. Ridge Road and Crown Hill Road

The Ridge Road remains, although its surface is not maintained and in sections is damaged due to drainage problems. More critical, the route has lost its *raison d'être* -- namely the serial views that unfolded while travelling the route during Church's lifetime (figs. 109-112). Today, second-growth trees and shrubs have screened all outward views even outside the foliage season, so the Ridge Road is experienced as a drive through dense woods, never its intended purpose. Portions of the Ridge Road are retained using dry-laid stone walls that have collapsed in some areas.

Crown Hill Road has experienced a similar adverse evolution (figs. 106 - 108). The road remains well preserved, and its narrow width and unimproved surface are closely reflective of the conditions in the historic period. Some sections are eroded and roadside drainage is blocked. In portions of the route, the Crown Hill Road traverses wooded ground as was the case in the historic period. Elsewhere, the road edges that were once

open, allowing extensive views north over the farm, toward the House and park and to the east, are today reduced to one narrow view-way focused on the House, never the intended effect. The wooded areas show the effects of abandonment, with excessive felled trees, downed debris and rampant growth of brambles and weed trees.

6. Farm

Included in this discussion are all land areas of Olana that were utilized for agricultural purposes in Church's lifetime, except the park (see above).⁷⁰⁷ About 80 acres, close to one-third the total Olana acreage, is included in this category -- 60 acres at the original 126-acre Brezie farm and 20 acres at the north meadow. As described in Section III - Design Description, the farm acres around the Barn were the setting of more than a dozen separate structures. In turn, the farm acreage has been subdivided into more than a dozen distinct fields. The discussion below uses the same breakdown as in the earlier section.

Today, the farm is abandoned. Some of the formerly open fields were allowed to grow into second-growth even before Louis Church's death in 1943. Others were let go during Sally Church's ownership, and some have been further encroached on in recent years. All these formerly open areas are today wooded. Other areas have grown up in unchecked saplings where Frederic Church had maintained selective clearing (fig. 103). In these areas, older trees are mixed with the newer, fast maturing second-growth. There is no active cultivation anywhere on the farm and only a few dozen remnant orchard trees remain (fig. 99). Nearly all the fence lines are dilapidated but most can be traced on the ground (fig. 104). In a few instances, there seems to have been a conscious attempt to dismantle fence lines that were no longer required to control grazing, and this has further obliterated historic field lines.

Today, most of the buildings associated with the Olana farm are missing. Those that remain are in various states of disrepair. Several of the outbuildings present in Church's lifetime were removed during the 1950s after falling into disuse following the cessation of farming that followed Louis Church's death. Some of the surviving structures

⁷⁰⁷ RMT, "Preliminary Historic Landscape Study: The Farm," BHS, 1993; with attached Existing Conditions Plan (scale: 1"=100'), dated: 3/15/1993.

are in moderately good conditions, others are badly deteriorating. Existing conditions are discussed for the exterior of these buildings only, as follows:

- **Cosy Cottage** (fig. 100)

While a new roof was installed in 1996, Cosy Cottage remains a derelict structure, more an eyesore than a positive contribution to the interpretation of Olana. Given its interest as a cottage ornée, and association with the Churches' life at the farm, the present situation is unfortunate. Details of the existing conditions may be gleaned from JAR and Richard R Gromek, "'Cosy Cottage' Historic Structure Report," NYSOPRHP, 4/1996 (draft).

- **cottage shed and privy**

While still recognizable as an outbuilding, this structure is much altered and in poor condition.⁷⁰⁸ There is not photographic documentation of this structure prior to the 1950s.

- **farmhouse**

This, the oldest structure at Olana, is now a ruin. It is shown in a photograph from 1934 (fig. 58). Except for a portion of the eastern side of the house, the timber structure has collapsed and only the dry-laid stone foundation wall remains. There has been no detailed investigation of this building.

- **farmhouse privy**

Not extant, but the location is discernible. There is no photographic documentation for this structure.

- **farmhouse shed**

Not extant, but the location is discernible. There is no photographic documentation for this structure.

- **Barn** (fig. 102)

The dairy Barn (1899) and connected older Barn and shed attachments are in moderately good condition, and remain as they were at the end of Church's lifetime. These are probably the best preserved of the farm structures still standing. The reddish color is

⁷⁰⁸ Peter Stevenson, "Restoration Report for 'Cosy Cottage,'" 1972, Chap. 4 [OSHS].

thought to have been used in the historic period and combines with the other extant farm buildings (see below) to form at least a remnant of the ensemble of farm buildings present in the historic period. There has been no detailed investigation of this building.

- **tool house**

It is unclear if the little shed shown beside the farm Stable in a photograph from 1934 (fig. 61) is the structure shown in this same spot in photographs from the historic period.⁷⁰⁹ If so, it has been altered and repositioned (turned 180° and moved slightly north and west from its earlier location). While extant, this structure is in very poor condition (the roof is a frayed lattice of rotted boards). What is left of its reddish color does blend with the other farm buildings.

- **farm Stable / wagon house** (fig. 102)

Only the Stable remains, in poor condition. The reddish color is appropriate and relates it to the other farm structures. The south facade appears in photographs from the early 20th century (fig. 44). The north facade is shown in a photograph from 1934 (fig. 61).

- **Coachman's House**

Not extant, but the location is discernible. The appearance of the south and west facades of this building is shown in photographs (fig. 44).

- **Corn Crib**

Not extant. The historic building may have been that photographed in 1934 (fig. 64).

- **granary**

Not extant, but the location and appearance are clear from foundations and a photograph from 1934 (fig. 62).

- **pump house**

This structure is in moderately good condition with same reddish color that relates it well to the other farm buildings. An attached saw mill to the east of this building is not

⁷⁰⁹ OL.1986.373.20.b.

extant. Its location has been established by archaeological investigations and is documented on photographs (figs. 44 and 63).

- **Earth Cellar (root cellar)**

Not extant, but the location may be at a depression on the east side of the Lake dam. There is no photographic documentation for this structure.

- **Ice House**

Not extant, but the location is discernible from the foundation which remains. The appearance of the Ice House is shown on a historic photograph (fig. 45), and on a photograph from 1934 (fig. 65).

The existing conditions of the land areas on the farm are described as follows:

- **cottage grounds** (fig. 100)

The area around the cottage is a lifeless and blighted version of its historic condition. The looping shale driveway surfaces are now obscured beneath turf. The road edges can still be traced and the lawn south of the cottage is now embowered under the mature trees seen in early photographs (fig. 38). Several pines believed to date from the historic period remain.

- **Barnyard** (fig, 102)

The area is discernible but lacks the fence definition that would clearly articulate its extent and configuration. The concrete and stone retaining wall may have been added after Church's lifetime.

- **Kitchen Garden** (fig. 102)

The area remains open land but its former fenced demarcation and any semblance of use are gone.

- **cottage garden** (fig. 99)

A concentration of small trees and post rows (vineyard) are all that remain of this garden, which seems to have been developed by Church for its proximity to Cosy Cottage.

- **north orchard**

The north and east boundaries are Brezie farm property lines denoted by stone walls and old trees. There is no evidence of a continuous fence line and the area was apparently not grazed. All the old apple trees had been removed prior to 1940. Today, the area is occasionally mowed. Weed trees occupy a rocky outcrop. There are several piles of organic refuse dotting the open area.

- **farmhouse lot** (fig. 99)

Except for some remnant hedge-row vegetation on the north, there is little remaining edge definition in this area, which is today devoid of the orchard trees known to have been present there.

- **secondary orchard**

As above, no orchard trees remain in this area, which is indistinct except on the south where a fence line can be traced. Formerly open, the drainage swale that crosses through this area has become a belt of scrub vegetation.

- **“Cultivated Ground”**

The area is defined by a stone wall along the eastern boundary and by a large tree on the west that denotes the narrow width of this crop-growing acreage. Drainage swales that existed north and south of this field are no longer maintained and the ground here is often flooded, being the lowest elevation on the Olana property.

- **east field**

Grazed in the historic period, fence lines can be traced on all sides of this field. Much of the open space has gone into second-growth. Elsewhere, refuse piles dot the open areas. With mowing restricted, these piles have grown into small thickets of saplings.

- **west field**

Remnant fence lines can be traced on the east and west side of this field, which was used for grazing. On the south, the line was re-configured after Church's lifetime so that grazing was restricted in the wet ground along the southern 1/3 of the field. This had returned to second-growth before 1940. The north side of the area abutted the kitchen

garden. Here, there is a large pile (est. 1,500 cu. yds.) of spoil from lake excavation undertaken in 1981.

• **southeast corner lot**

This area was abandoned and began to return to second-growth before 1940. Remnant fence lines can be followed on the north (partially stone walls), east, and south (stone walls). The west line was the fence erected by Church in association with the development of the Crown Hill Road. Only one small portion of this fence has been found, with a single timber post and coils of barbed wire. These coils and the lack of other remnants indicate that this line was dismantled. As a relatively new fence installation late in Church's lifetime, the line was unencumbered by older trees or stonewalls and is now almost indiscernible in the woods.

• **north field (north meadow)**

Grazing had been abandoned in this field before 1940. Remnant fence lines can be traced around the full perimeter. The north end of this field was devastated by the intrusion of the re-aligned Rt. 23 in the early 1960s. Today, much of this area is dense second-growth woods.

• **south field (north meadow)**

Grazing may have been abandoned in this field before 1940, but it remained at least partially open as late as 1947. Remnant fence lines are discernible along the north and west side. A prominent wall / fence is located on the south. The fence on the east, and much of the length on the west, seems to have been dismantled, with few traces found on-site today. There are several old field trees in the area. These trees have been engulfed in second-growth woods. As a result, lower limbs have been killed by the shady conditions. In the western area of the south field can be found the remnants of a tennis court, installed for the use of the Church children in the 1890s. It seems to have been abandoned after 1900.

In summary, the integrity of Olana's landscape underscores its historical significance, marred only by the 1960 intrusion of Route 23 in the northern portion of the property. Despite its fundamental preservation, Olana has lost its historic use and appearance as a residential farm and ornamental landscape. Today a museum property, the vast majority of visitors experience the House and immediate grounds, and what can be seen travelling the State-installed, paved road system -- all in circulation patterns that

deviate from the historic situation. Only rarely do outside visitors stop at Cosy Cottage or trek to outlying areas. There is little interpretation to explain Church's designed landscape or make sense of the situation today. Local citizens do utilize the carriage roads for walking and jogging, but even these more habitual users seldom visit off-road areas or understand the historical role and appearance of the areas they traverse. In turn, the landscape away from the House grounds have been blatantly abandoned. Woodland conditions proliferate, roadways erode, former fields sprout rampant crops of brambles and poison ivy, outbuildings deteriorate and old stone walls collapse without notice.

ILLUSTRATIONS (Figures 1 - 118)



Key to Symbols:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>A South Entrance
(modern entrance)</p> <p>B Rip VanWinkle Bridge
(west to Thruway, Exit 21)</p> <p>C The Thomas Cole House
(Cedar Grove)</p> | <p>D Catskill Station
(Greendale)</p> <p>E Rt. 23 to Taconic Parkway</p> <p>F Rt. 9G south to Rhinebeck</p> <p>G Rt. 9G north to Hudson</p> |
|--|---|

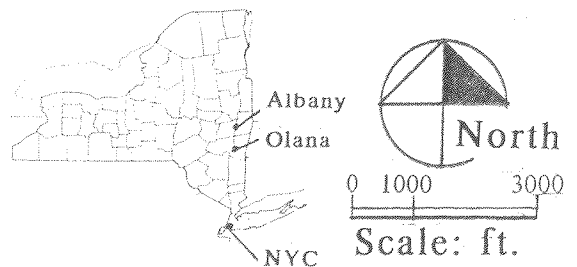


Figure 1 - Location Plan

Olana is located on a dominant hill (“Churchs Hill”) opposite the Village of Catskill and about 3 miles south of the City of Hudson. Views from the hilltop were panoramic but the southwest view, over the Hudson and to the distant Catskills, was especially prized. [United States Geological Survey (USGS): 1962, revised: 1978, edited: 1980, annotated The Office of R.M. Toole, 1996].



Frederic Edwin Church
(1826-1900)
Photo, c. 1865 [OL.1992.16.1]



Isabel Mortimer Carnes
(1836-1899)
Photo, c. 1865 [not accessioned]



Frederic Joseph Church
(1866-1914)
Photo, c. 1885 [OL.1992.19]



Theodore Winthrop Church
(1869-1914)
Photo, c. 1885 [OL.1994.40]



Louis Palmer Church
(1870-1943)
Photo, c. 1885 [OL.1992.20.b]



Isabel Charlotte Church
(1871-1935)
Photo, c. 1885 [OL.1982.1317.2]

Figure 3 - Photographs of the Church Family, c. 1865, c. 1885.

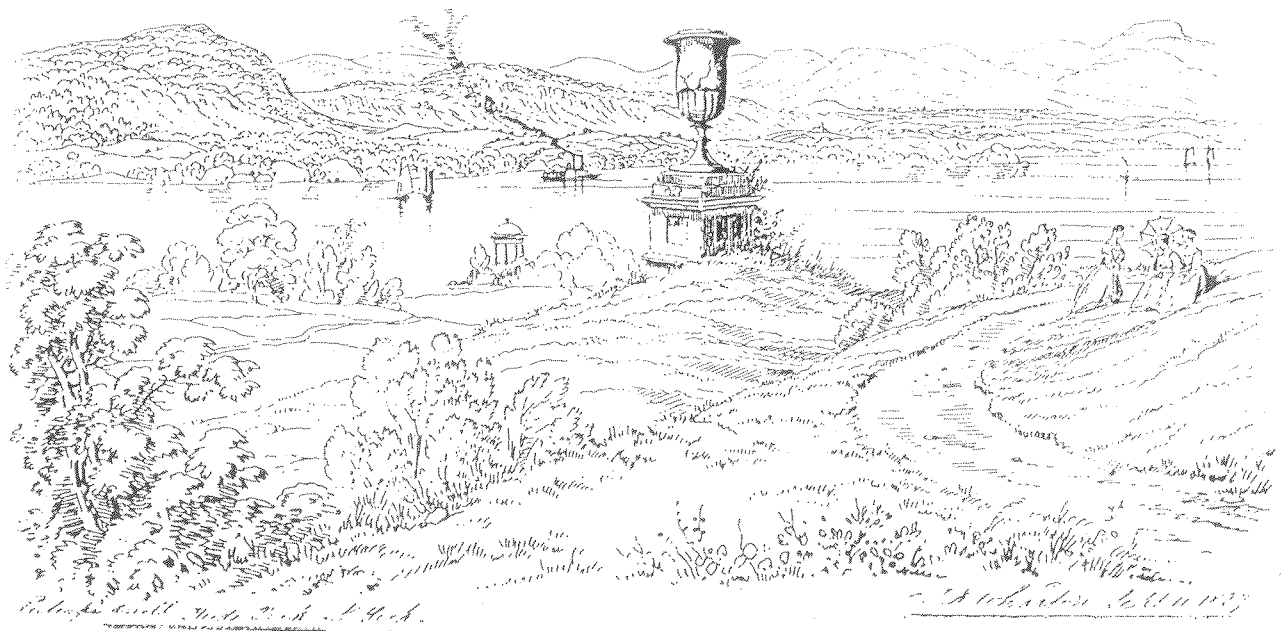


Figure 4 - Sketch showing Hyde Park, 1839.

This drawing shows the western prospect from the terrace at Hyde Park (today the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site) during the residence of David Hosack. Entitled: "Euterpe Knoll, Hyde Park," it was drawn by T.K. Wharton, who visited the property in 1832. Note the large ornamental urn (figures at right provide scale). Left of the urn, in the background along the river, can be seen a classical temple, called a summer house. [New York Public Library, Manuscripts Division].



Figure 5 - Engravings, 1844.

Illustrations of the Picturesque (left) and the Beautiful (right) design modes, from A.J. Downing's Landscape Gardening (2nd ed., 1844, p. 55). Downing described two separate manifestations of English landscape gardening and effectively illustrated the differences in contrasting engravings from his first book. The Picturesque emphasized an appearance in harmony with the natural conditions along the Hudson. A Gothic Revival house, a rustic summerhouse and woodland vegetation (including a dying tree close to the house) characterize the scene. A man with a gun, accompanied by a dog, provide appropriate animation. In contrast, a woman and child stand before a classical house, flanked by urns and a fountain, emblematic of the more refined Beautiful approach.

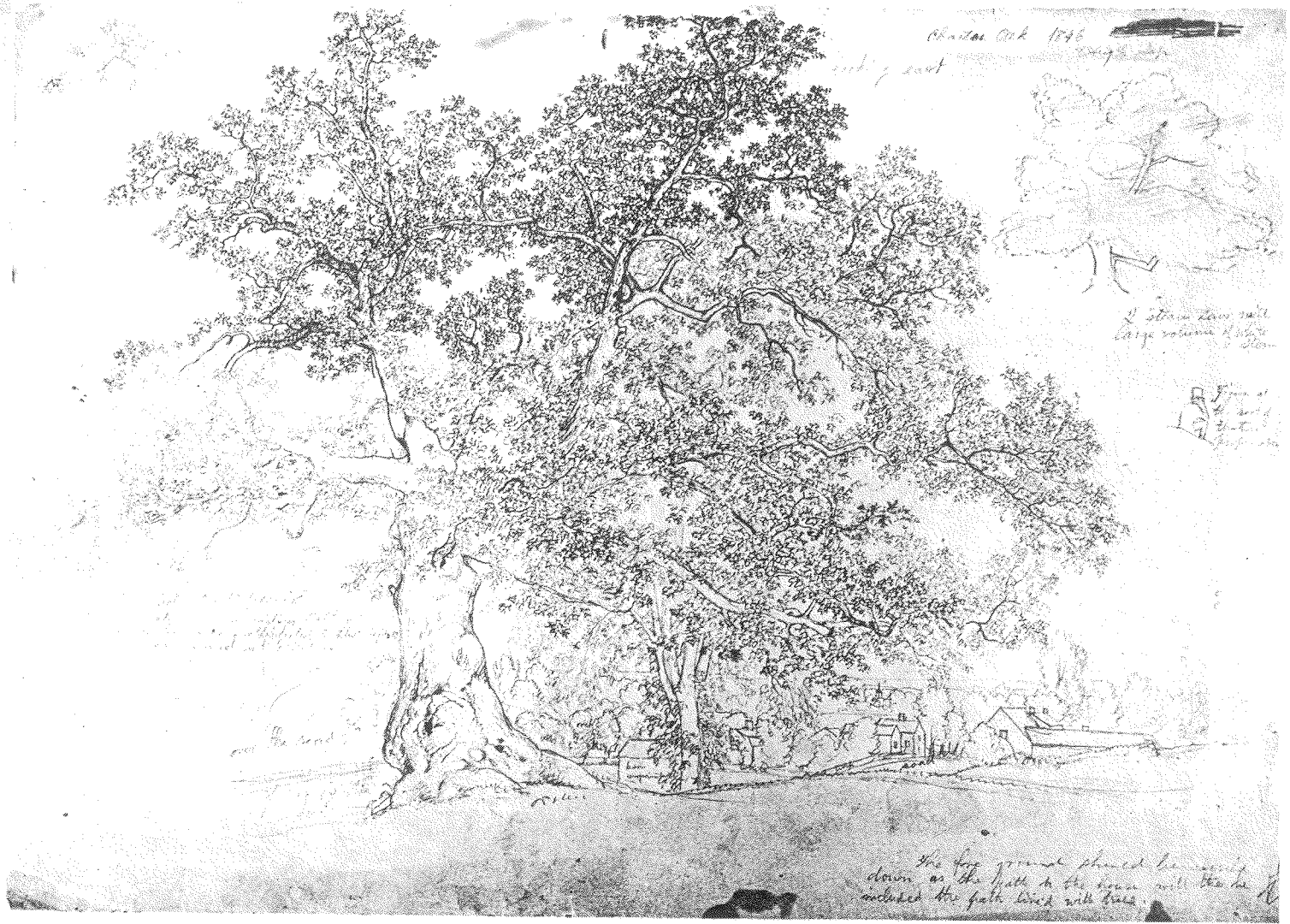


Figure 6 -Drawing, 1846.

This sketch, showing the Charter Oak in Hartford Connecticut was done by Frederic Church at age twenty. It shows the minute detail included in the artist's drawings done in the open air [OL.1977.302].



Figure 7 - Painting, 1860.

Church's Twilight in the Wilderness, shown here, is typical of the reverence shown for unspoiled nature in American art in this period. The view celebrates the raw wilderness landscape, untouched except for the painter's composition of the scene. [Cleveland Museum of Art].



Figure 8 - Painting, May, 1870.

The farm was the subject of many of Frederic Church's pencil sketches, oil studies and finished works, such as the oil painting depicting Apple Blossoms at Olana of 1870, shown here [OL.1981.123].

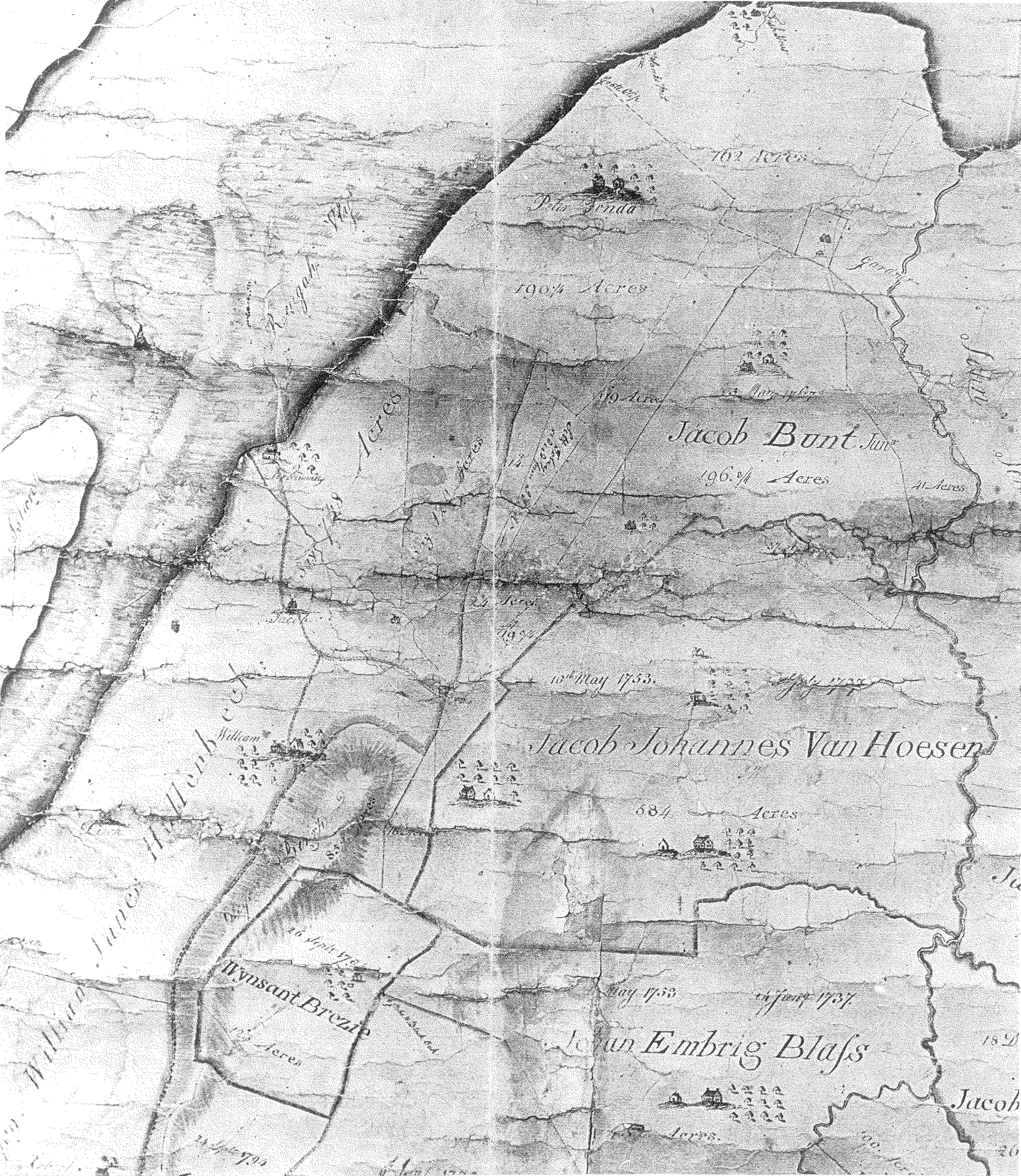


Figure 9 - Map, 1799.

Penfield Map, 1799 (detail). This portion of the map shows the "Wynsant Brezie" farm, with the "123 acres" and the date of "26, Sept. 1794," inscribed on the plat. The date records the initial development of the farm that would evolve into Olana during the next 100 years. North is at the top of the page. [Columbia County Historical Society].

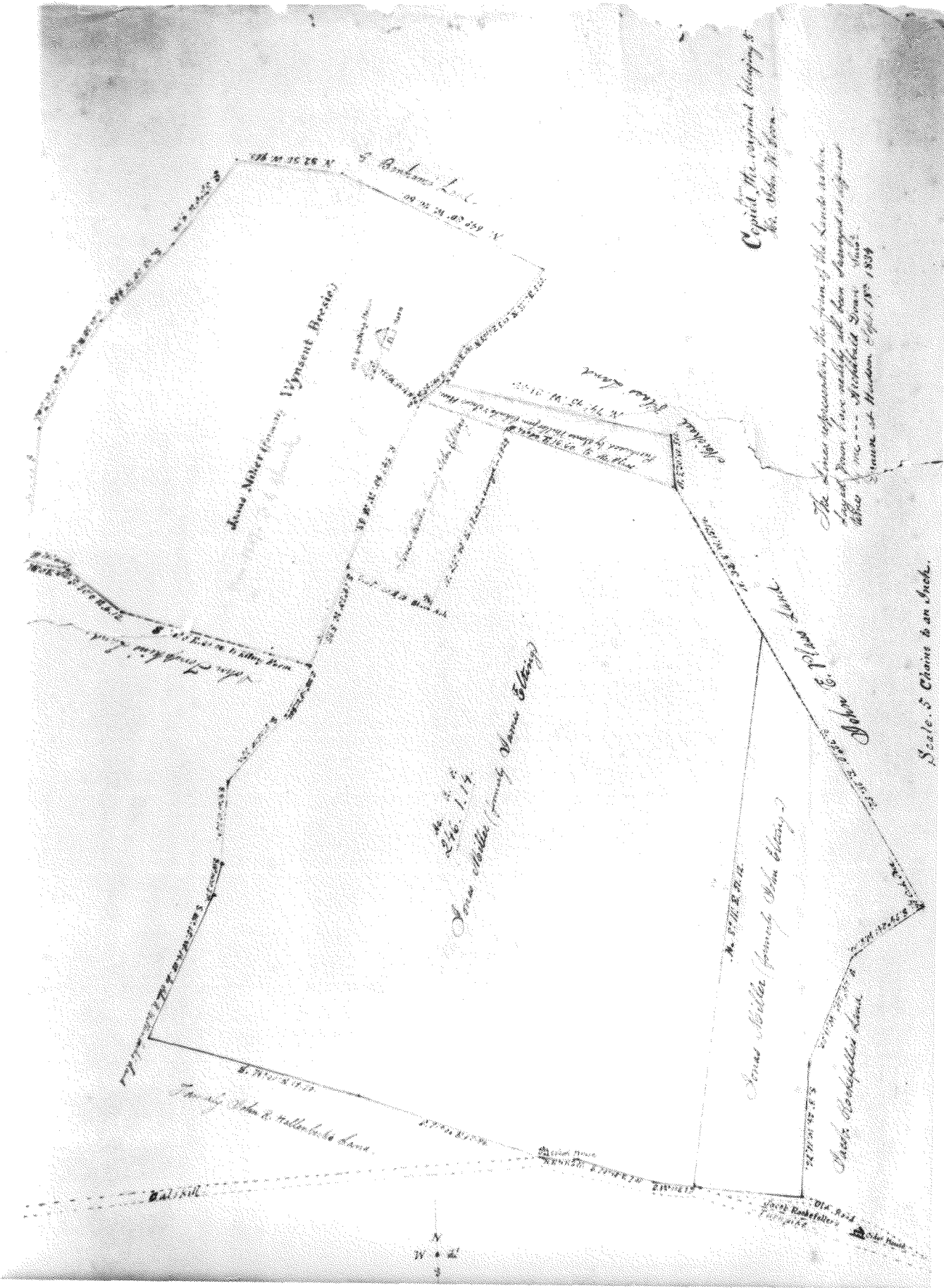


Figure 10 - Survey Map showing Jonas Miller Property, 1834.

The Brezie farm is at the upper left, showing the farmhouse, labeled "Old Dwelling House," and a "Barn." Access to the Oak Hill-Hudson Road was at the southwest corner of the Brezie parcel (extreme left, where the boundary image is indistinct). North is at the top of the page. [OL.1980.1619].

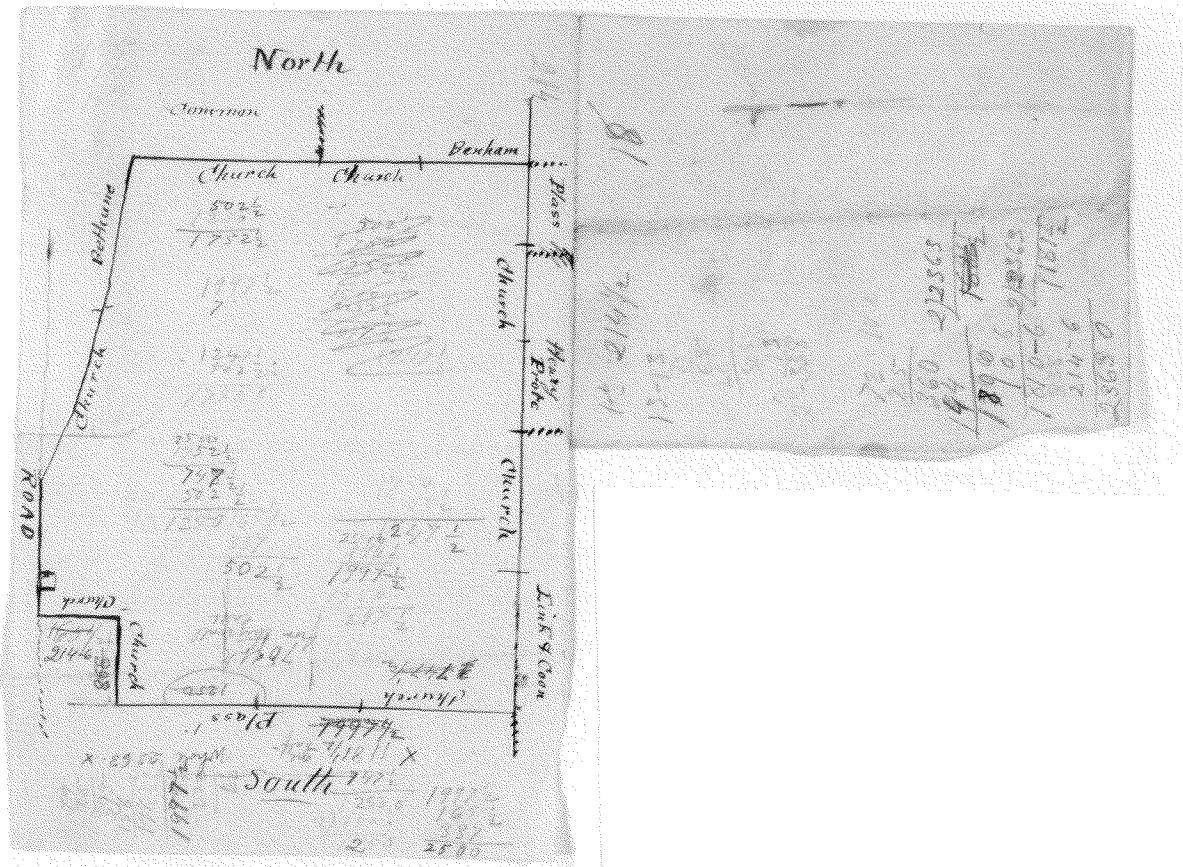


Figure 11 - Sketch Map showing Frederic Church's property, 1861-63.

This hand-drawn map, attributed to F.E. Church, shows the Brezie farm after Church's purchase. The map confirms the early access onto the "Road" (i.e., the Oak Hill-Hudson Road), and the presence of a small house located close to the public highway near Church's entrance, which was in the narrow space between the house block and the boundary line on the south -- in the area labeled (upside-down): "Church."

Further north, the steep slope between Church and the highway was owned by "Bethune," who held it from 1861 to 1864 when Church purchased it. Note the lot at the north, labeled "Common." This was the hilltop, later the site of the main House begun in 1870. [OL.1988.745].



0 100 500
Scale, ft.

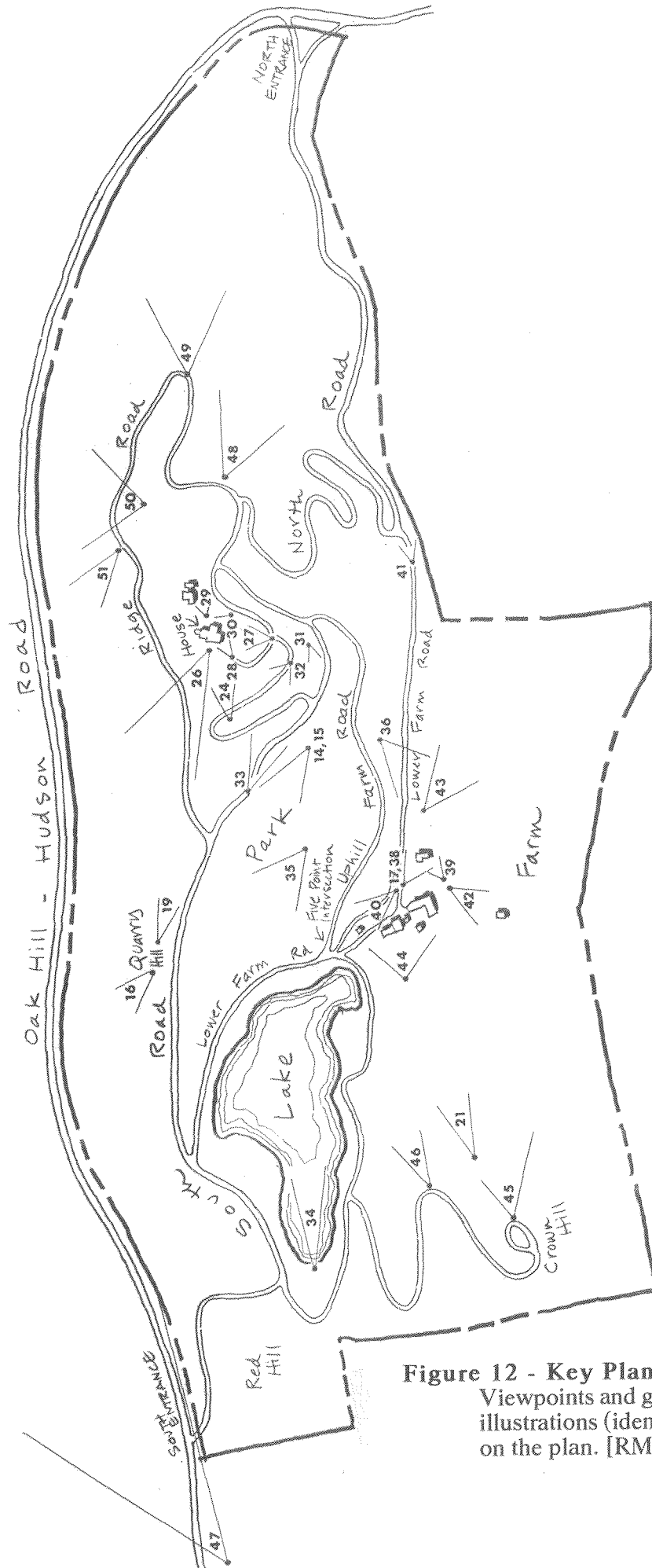


Figure 12 - Key Plan Locating Other Figures. Viewpoints and general orientations of selected illustrations (identified by figure #s) are shown on the plan. [RMT, 1996].

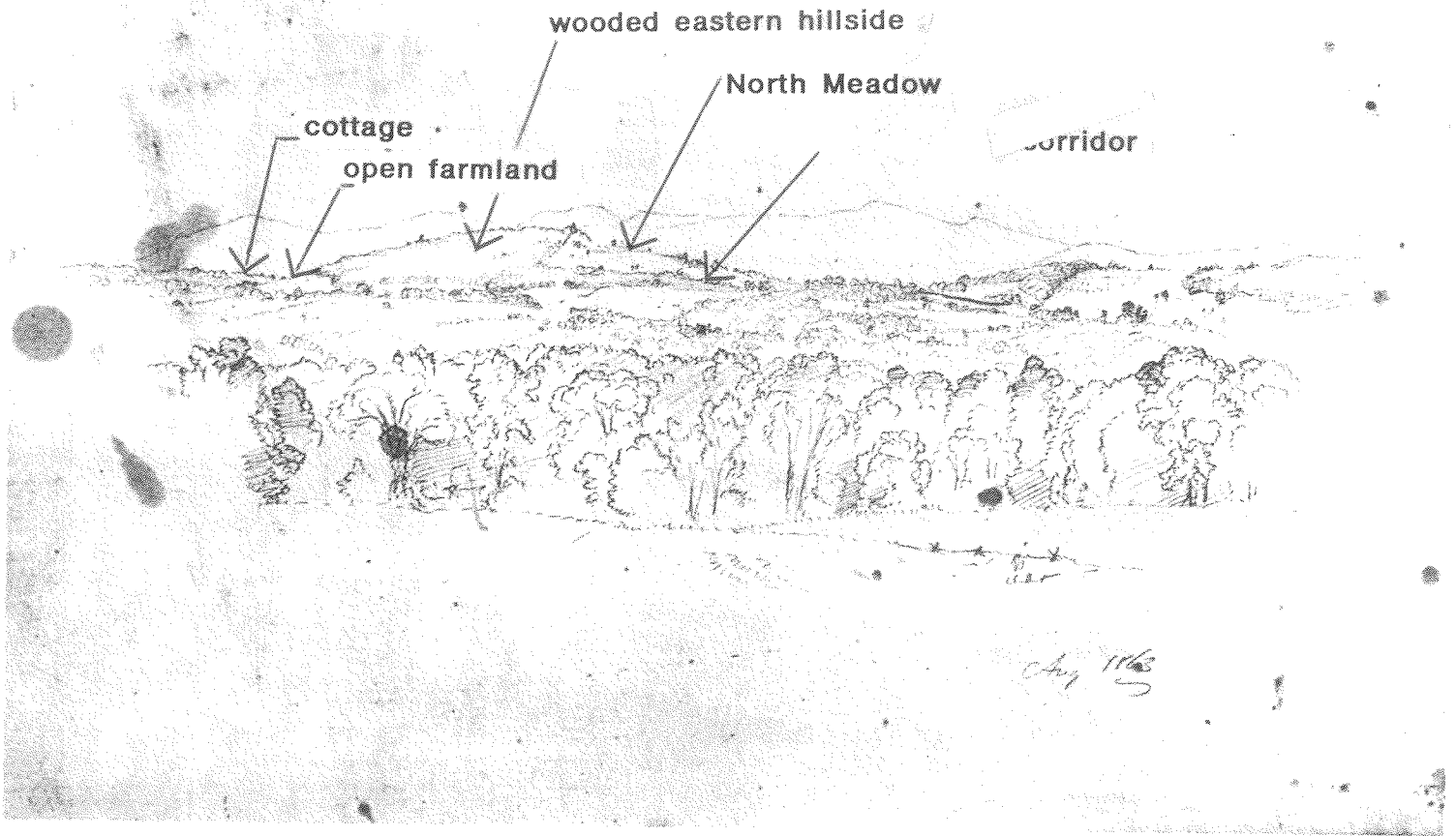


Figure 13 - Pencil sketch, 1863.

The view by F.E. Church, dated August 1863 (annotated), looks west showing the Olana hill with the Catskill Mountains beyond. Cosy Cottage is seen (on the original) at the extreme left, with open farmland surrounding it. The wooded eastern side of the hill is to the right, followed by the open north meadow, clearly seen here on the north side of the hill. The future North Road would follow the wooded corridor shown as a narrow strip at the bottom edge of the open ground. [OL.1977.182, annotated RMT, 1996].



Figure 14 - Painting, 1864.

The oil painting, by Arthur Parton (12-7/8" x 24-1/4"), dated 1864, was done from a spot near Frederic Church's Studio, believed to have been built at about the time of this painting. The view takes in a panorama from north of Quarry Hill (the high point behind and to the right of the tall foreground tree) to the mid-point of the future Lake (lower left). Note the wide Inbocht Bay (left of the tall tree). Note the importance of the old pine trees on Quarry Hill, presenting a characteristic foreground to the distant views. Red Hill, with only a few trees, is seen behind the future Lake site. In 1864, Lake excavation was only starting and the low ground seems to have been drained and used to raise crops. The area of the park seen in the painting is almost treeless. A few mature apple trees remain lower on the slope and small, broken trees exist in the right foreground and seem to extend further uphill. [OL.1981.20].



Figure 15 - Painting, 1871-72.

Showing south view in winter, oil painting by FEC (11-3/4"x18-1/4"). This view is similar to the Parton painting (fig. 14), but thrusting forward (and perhaps leaving out peripheral and intermediate trees). Inbocht Bay, that centered the view toward the Hudson River, is ahead. This winter sketch again highlights the importance of Quarry Hill and its vegetation as foreground to the distant views. Here, smaller evergreens, probably hemlocks as well as field cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*), are shown with the larger sculptural pines. Wooded ground (all young trees) is seen in the area edging the Lake in the far left. Between, Church's brush strokes suggest a road sweeping up and around Quarry Hill. This would be the South Road known to have been laid out before this date, although clearly snow-covered in this view. [OL.1980.36].

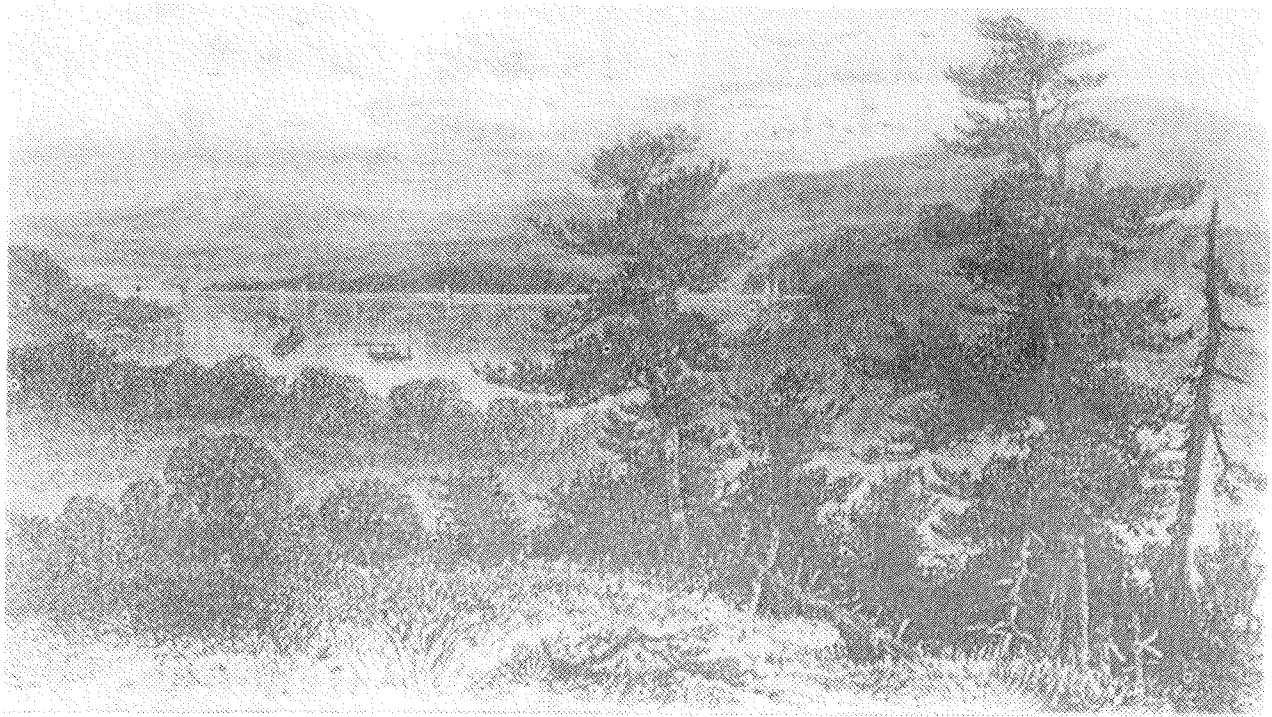


Figure 16 - Engraving, 1876.

Showing southwest view from Quarry Hill with Inbocht ahead, caption "View from the Grounds of Mr. Church's Residence." ["The Homes of America V," The Art Journal (NY ed.), Vol. 2 (August, 1876), p. 247].

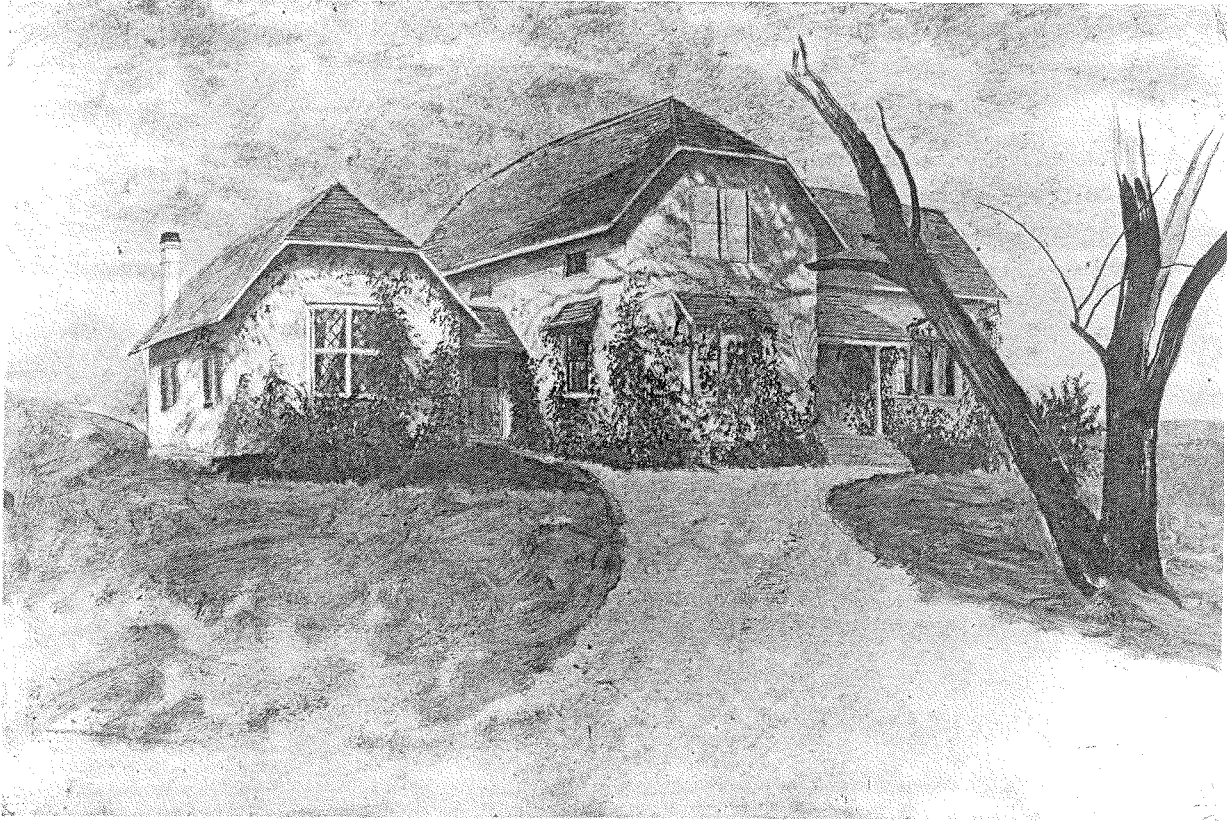
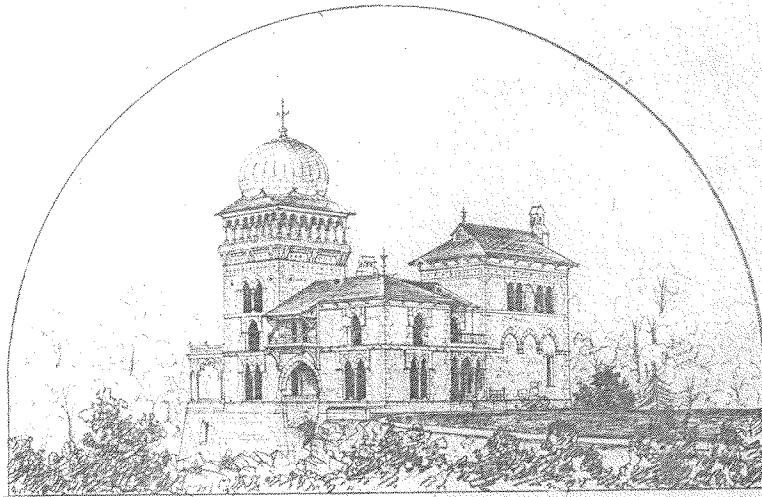


Figure 17 - Painting, c. 1869.

Cosy Cottage from the south, oil painting by FEC (11-1/2"x17-3/8"). The original section of the cottage is seen here on the right, designed by Richard Morris Hunt's office in 1860. Church added the wing on the left in 1869. The cottage location integrated the Churches into farm life. Here they overlooked the kitchen garden and orchards and were close to the barn and stable, across a diminutive, tree-shaded green. After ten years, the Churches moved up the hill to the main house. [OL.1977.315].



Study of a House for F.E. Church Esq' re
New York N.Y.

By architect
Calvert Vaux



Figure 18 - Drawing, 1870.

Entitled "Study of a House for F.E. Church, Esq' re," stamped "Vaux, Withers & Co." (by Calvert Vaux). This drawing confirms the intended perch-like siting of the house, with Vaux's sketch eliminating the ground along the first floor at the south facade. This was not carried out. In the foreground, Vaux shows a circular arrival terrace, with a retaining wall. This is similar to the arrangement later constructed, suggesting that Vaux (and probably Church) considered the idea at an early date. [OL.1982.1107].



Figure 19 - Drawing, 1872 and Painting, c. 1875-80.

Top: Pencil sketch by FEC (35.3 cm.x24.9 cm), probably 1872 and below, oil painting by FEC (12-1/8"x9-1/2"), c. 1875-80. The view looks north from the eastern slope of Quarry Hill, directly along a line that separated the wooded hillside (left) from the open park (right). Both the painting and the sketch show no vegetation immediately south of the House -- across the entire length of its facade. The oil painting includes several conical evergreens, possibly young pines or cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*), along the sloping ground where the new approach road was later built in 1888-90. [Cooper-Hewitt Museum - 1917-4-666].



Figure 20 - Map Showing Olana, 1873.

This map was prepared just after Church completed construction of the main House and the sinuous North Road, both clearly shown here. The black square just above the "F" in "Fred." represents Church's studio. Cosy Cottage and the old farmhouse are represented northeast of the Lake. The property is illustrated with two gate houses, at the North and South Entrances, each inscribed "F.E.C." At the South Entrance, another black square is shown close to the Lake with the label "Studio" close-by. There is no other reference to this second structure and the studio label seems misplaced. The label "Spring" apparently refers to the source of the Lake. [Detail from: S.N. Beers, Atlas of Columbia County, N.Y., 1873].



Figure 21 - Photograph, c. 1880.

This is the only known view showing Church's Studio, built in 1864-65 and dismantled in about 1888. The area showing the Studio is enlarged from a more panoramic view taken from the western side of Crown Hill. In this period, the ground here was an open meadow or pasture. The photograph shows a unique view of the park. The still immature tree plantings, most known to have been set out in the early 1860s, do not appear to be of a size or age that would suggest dating this photograph after the late 1870s. [OL.1986.378.18.c].

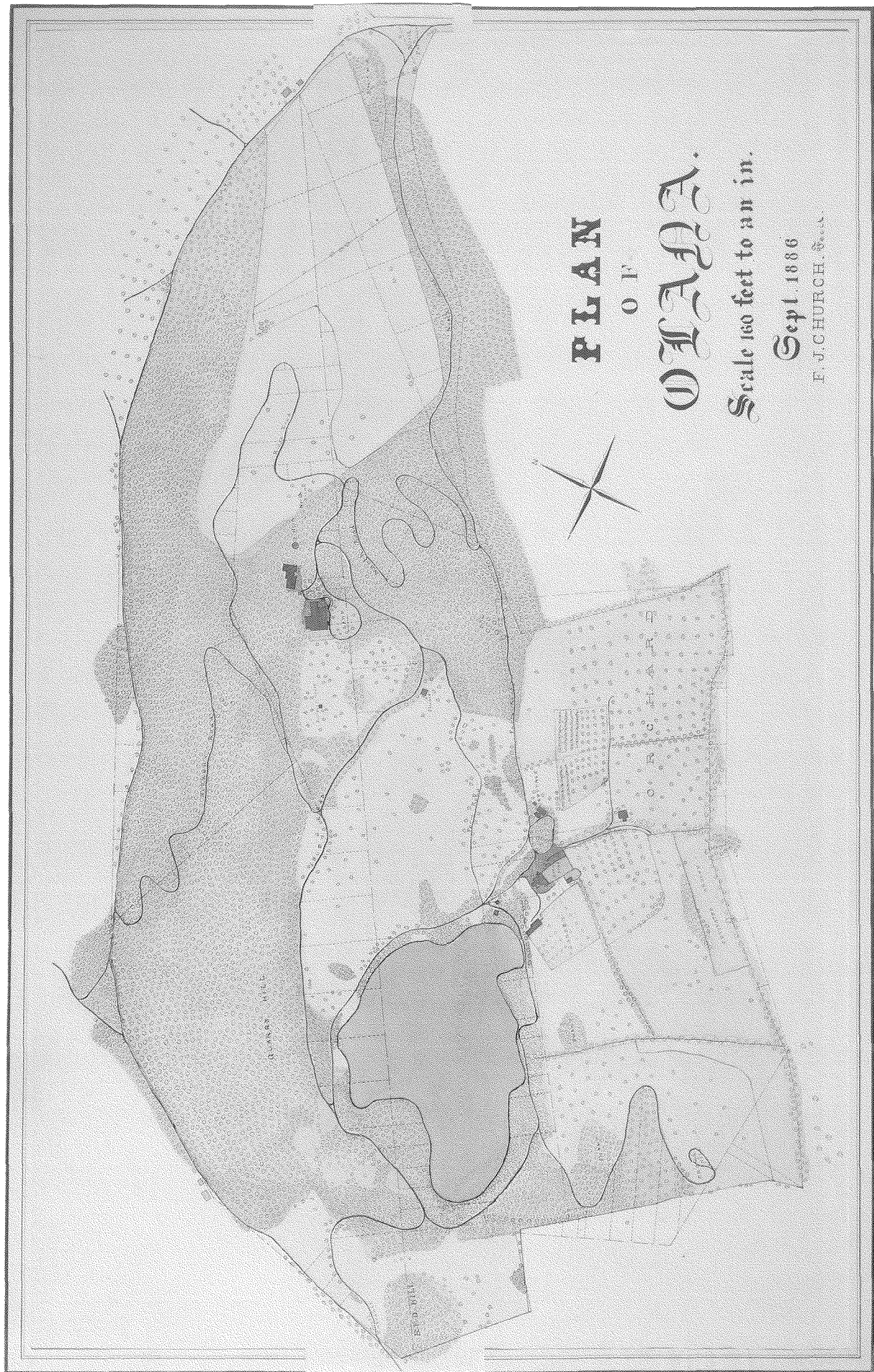


Figure 22 - Plan of Olana, 1886.

This plan was drafted by Frederic Church's 20 year old son, Frederic Joseph Church, in September 1886. The plan was prepared as part of young Church's studies at The College of New Jersey (Princeton University after 1896). [OL.1984.39].

This is an important document related to the site's historic landscape because it shows Olana in its substantially completed form. Only the New Approach Road, and its associated mingled garden are missing from the layout at Church's death fourteen years after this plan was drawn. The plan is not a mathematically accurate depiction but it does provide invaluable information not recorded elsewhere.

The plan does show the landscape design, including building locations and the pattern of vegetation. The coloring adds additional information (although imperfectly on the color copy reproduced here), as follows:

- Blue - water (Lake)
- Red - buildings
- Dark Green (Brownish here, with circle pattern) - woods
- Light Green (pale Yellow here) - open ground
- Tan (an Orange tint here) - ploughed ground
- Red lines - fence arrangements

The exact locations of individual trees can not be accurately referenced, but tree groupings, especially wooded conditions (trees and scrub growth) are shown and gradations from open fields to densely wooded situations are apparent.

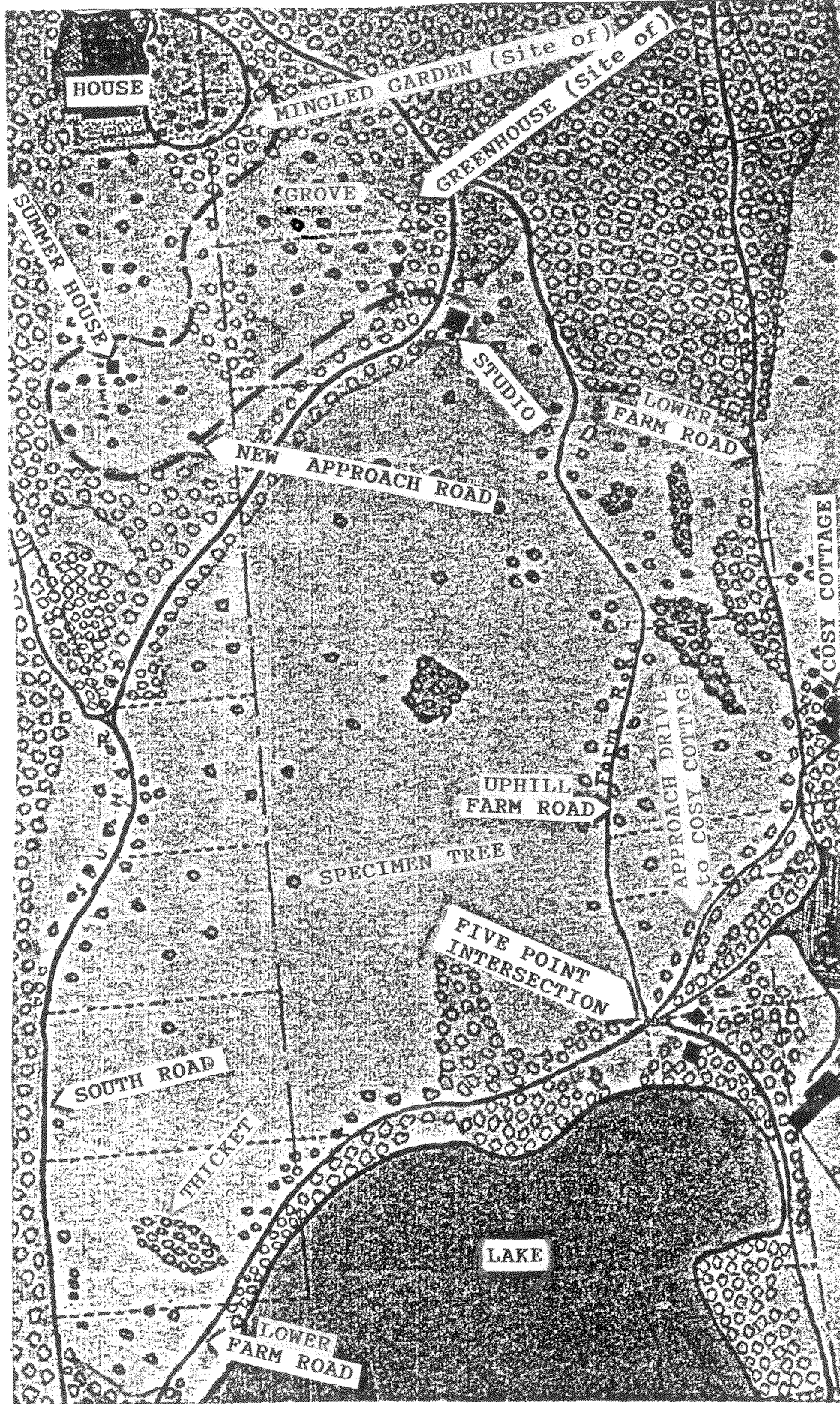


Figure 22a - Plan of Olana (detail of park), 1886.

The park is shown annotated with road and features identified with names used in this report. The New Approach Road has also been added as it was constructed after the plan was prepared. [OL.1984.39, annotated RMT, 1996].

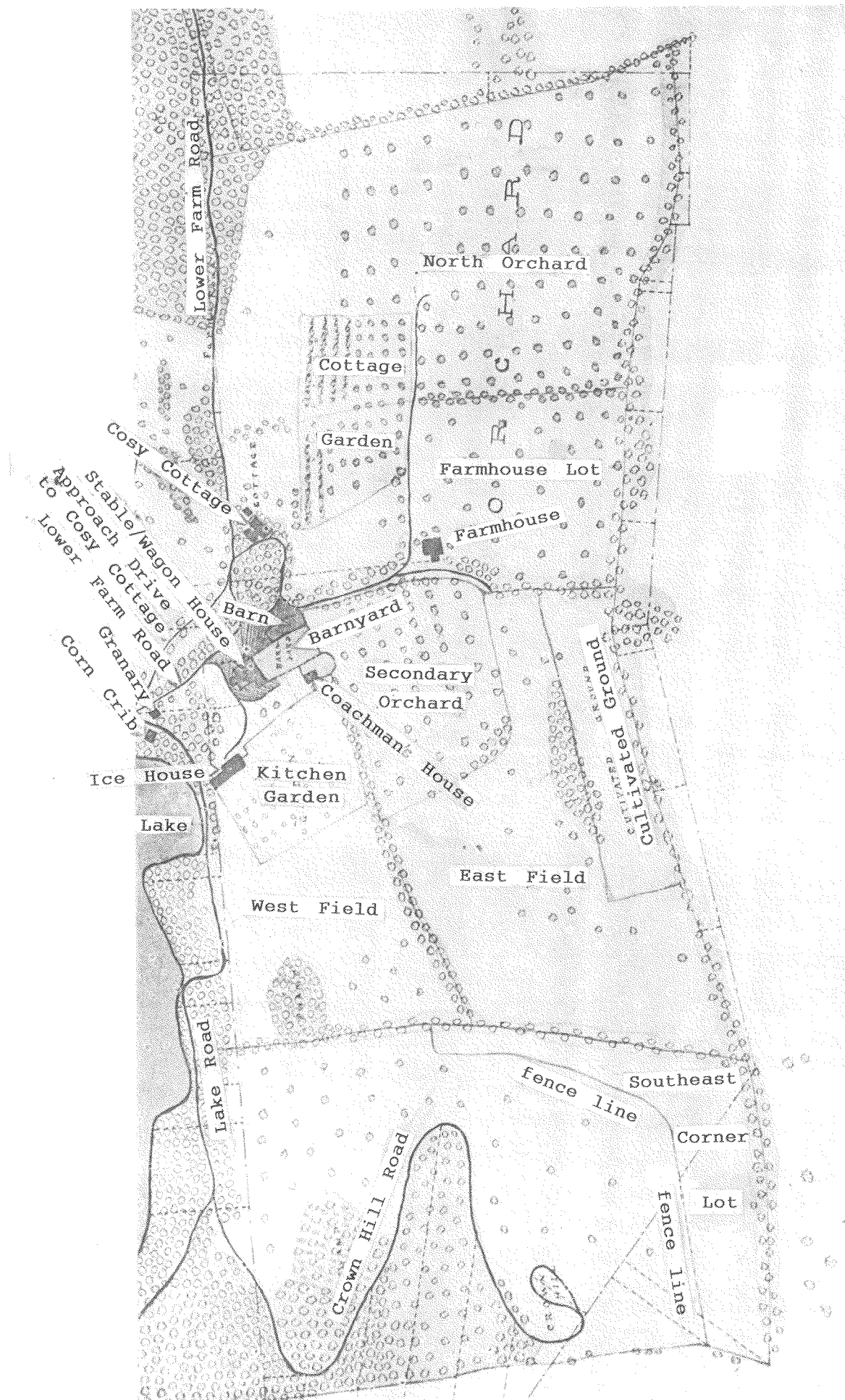


Figure 22b - Plan of Olana (detail of farm), 1886.

The farm is shown annotated with buildings and fields identified. [OL.1984.39, annotated RMT, 1996].

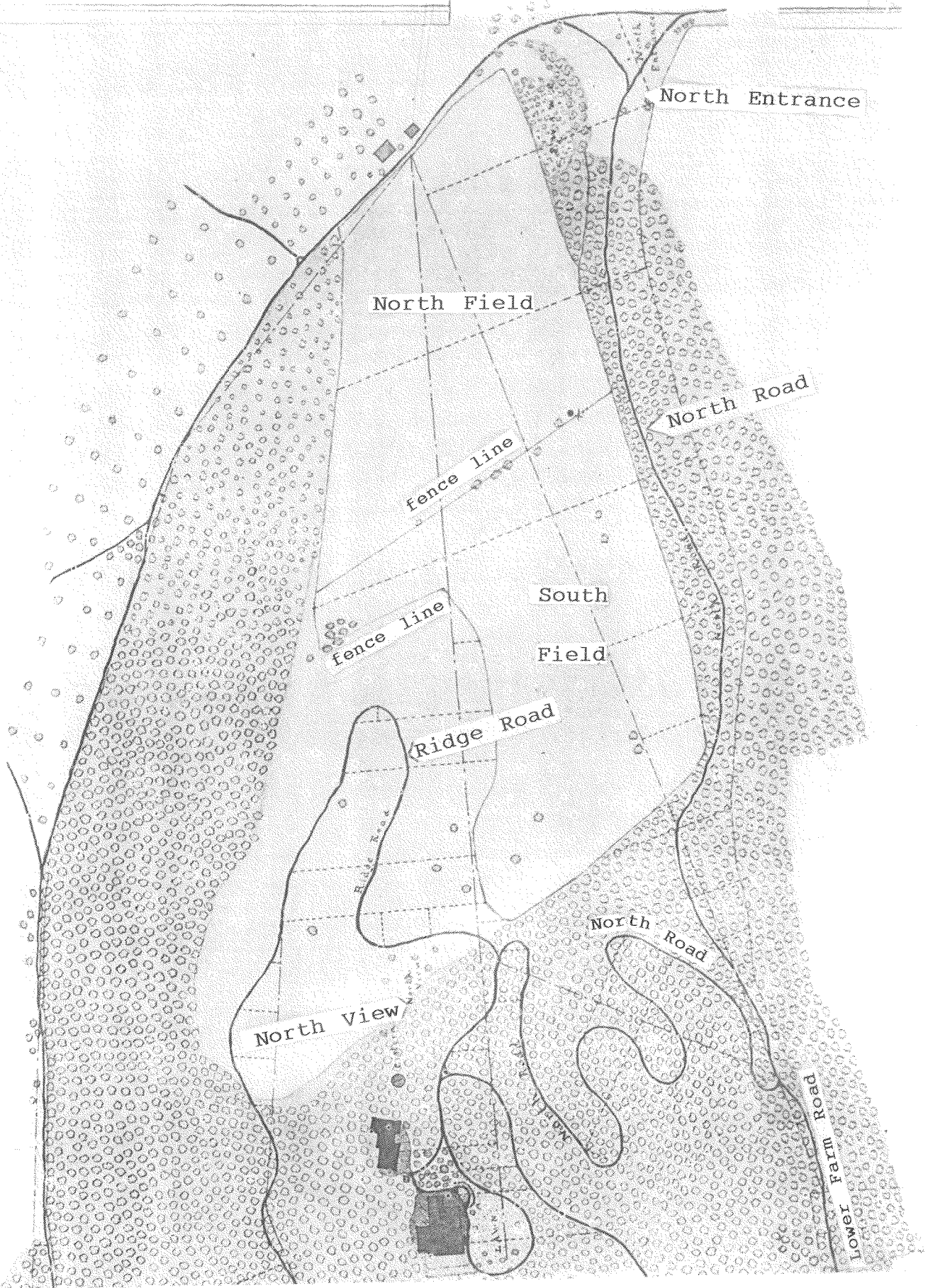


Figure 22c - Plan of Olana (detail of north meadow & North Road), 1886.
The northern area of Olana is shown annotated with the names of features and fields identified. [OL.1984.39, annotated RMT, 1996].

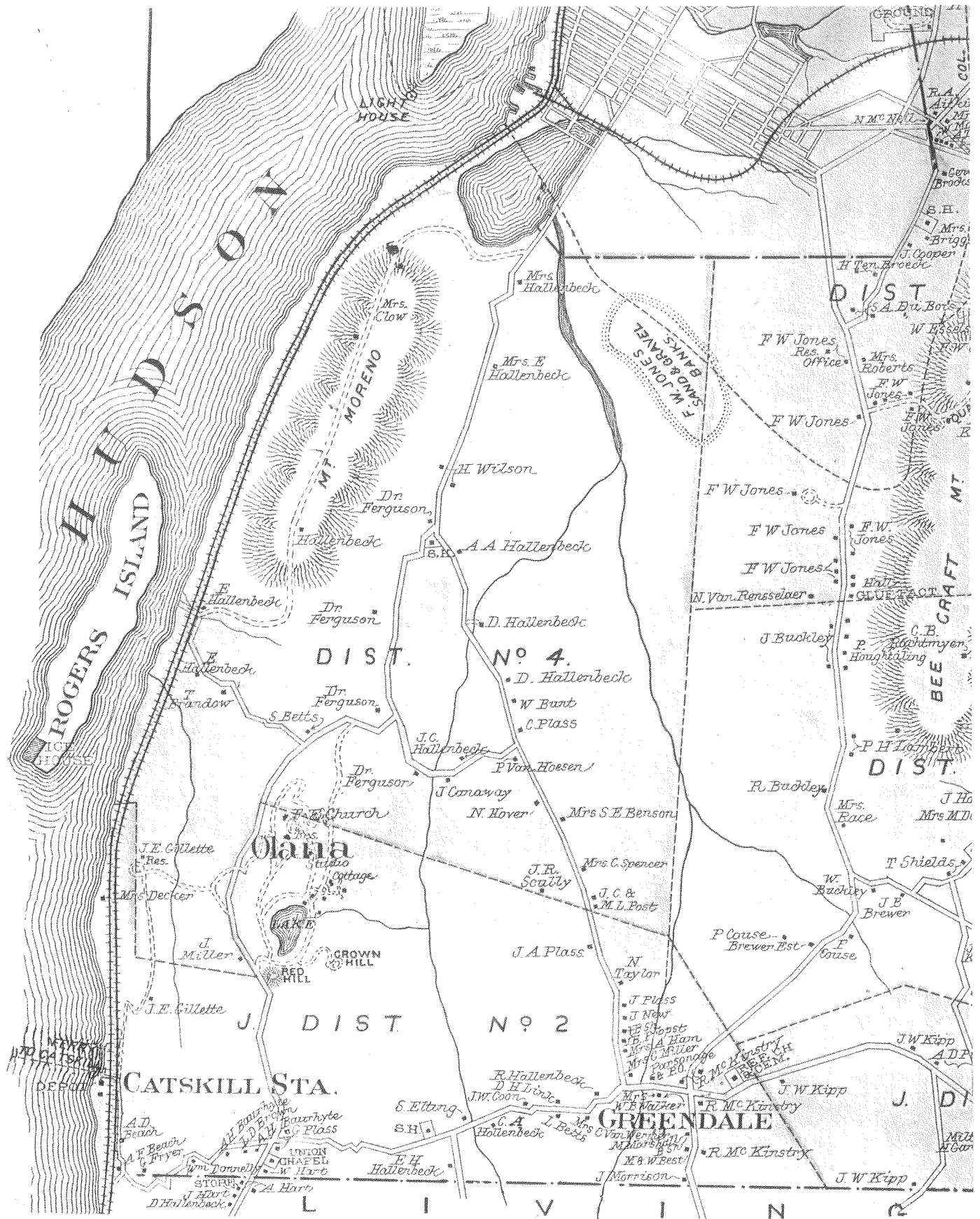


Figure 23 - Map Showing Olana, 1888.

Drafted fifteen years after an earlier Beers Atlas (fig. 20), the property is shown in its final developed form. The Ridge Road, the road around the Lake, and the Crown Hill Road are now included. The North Entrance shows the alterations made since the road to Hudson was re-routed in the 1870s (compare this area with the 1873 map). The distinct splay toward the east is shown (the older portion of the forked entrance is not shown). At the South Entrance, the curving entrance road oriented to the south and curving around Red Hill is clearly delineated. The studio, a black square in the "n" of "Olana," was soon dismantled as Church completed the studio wing on the house. [Detail from: S.N. Beers, *Atlas of Columbia County, N.Y.*, 1888].

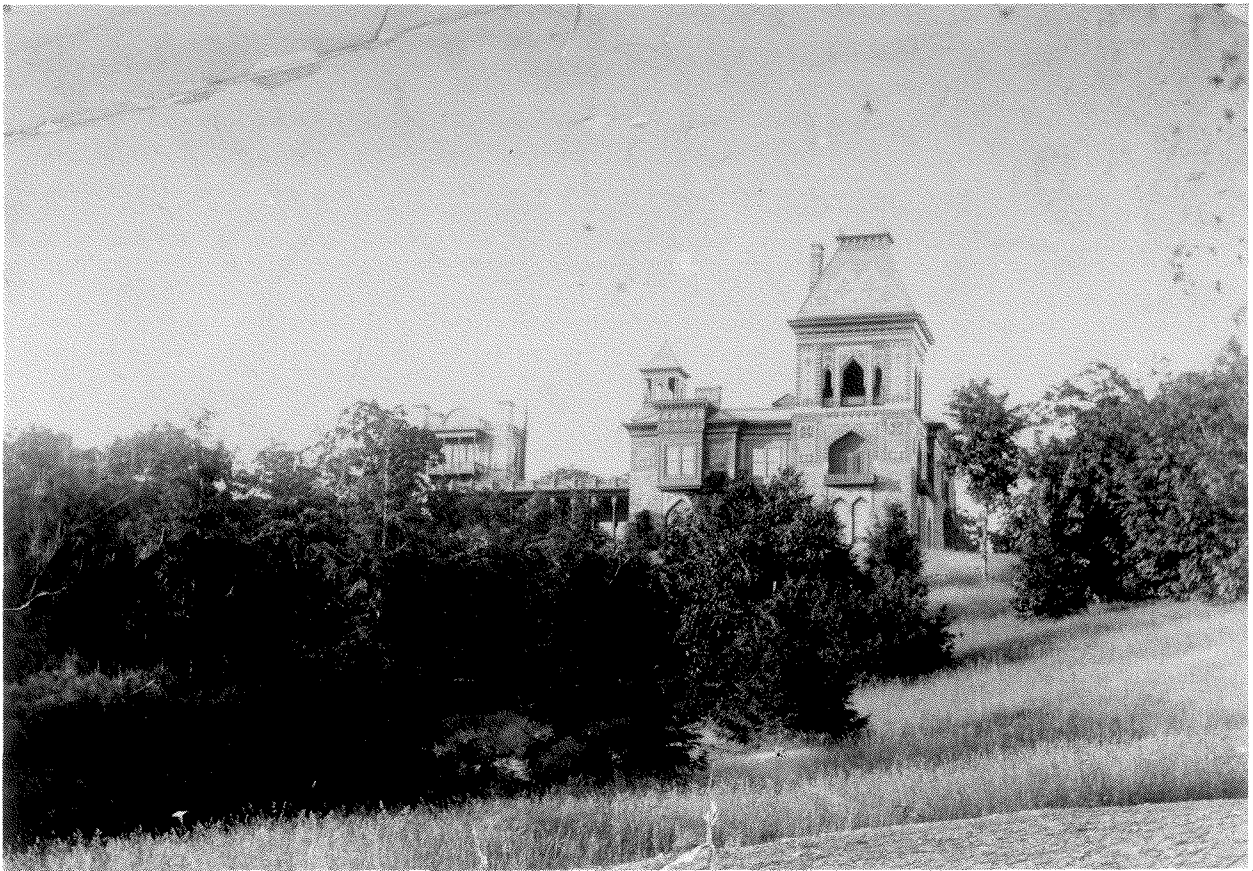


Figure 24 - Photograph of House from south (at New Approach Road) c. 1891-1903.

The view shows the extent of evergreen vegetation (pine and hemlock trees are discernable) together with deciduous trees and shrubs that were planted south of the House and north of the New Approach Road (seen in the foreground, right side of this image). The size of these trees and evidence from other photographs suggest that they were planted at about the time the New Approach Road was constructed, c. 1887. [OL.1987.164].

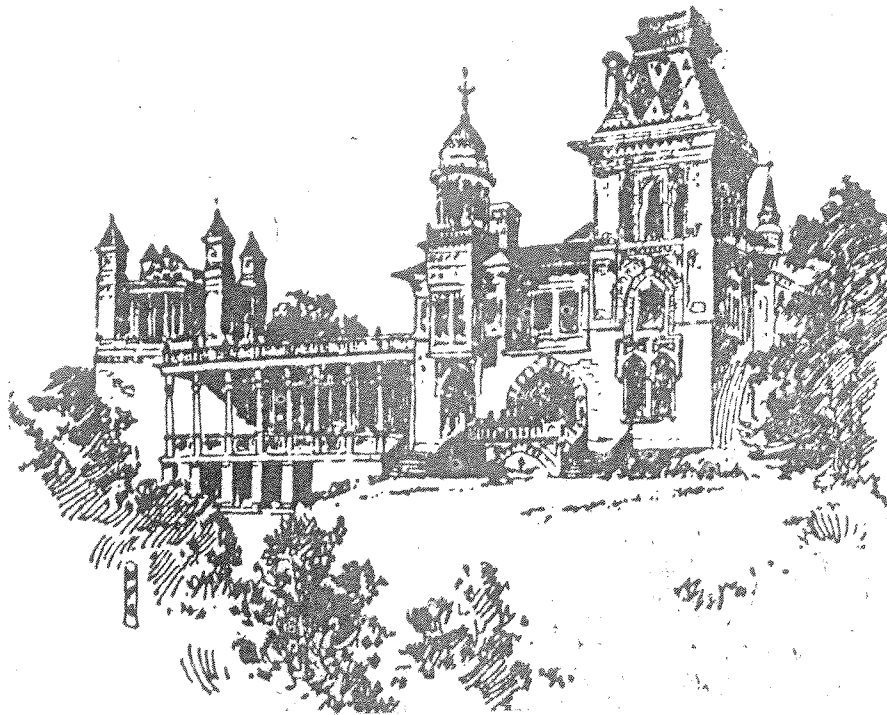


Figure 25 - Engraving, 1890.

The view looks north showing the house from the southeast. The engraving shows the elaborate porch that Church apparently intended to build at the ombra. [Frank J. Bonnelle, The Sunday Herald (Boston, MA), September 7, 1890, p. 17].

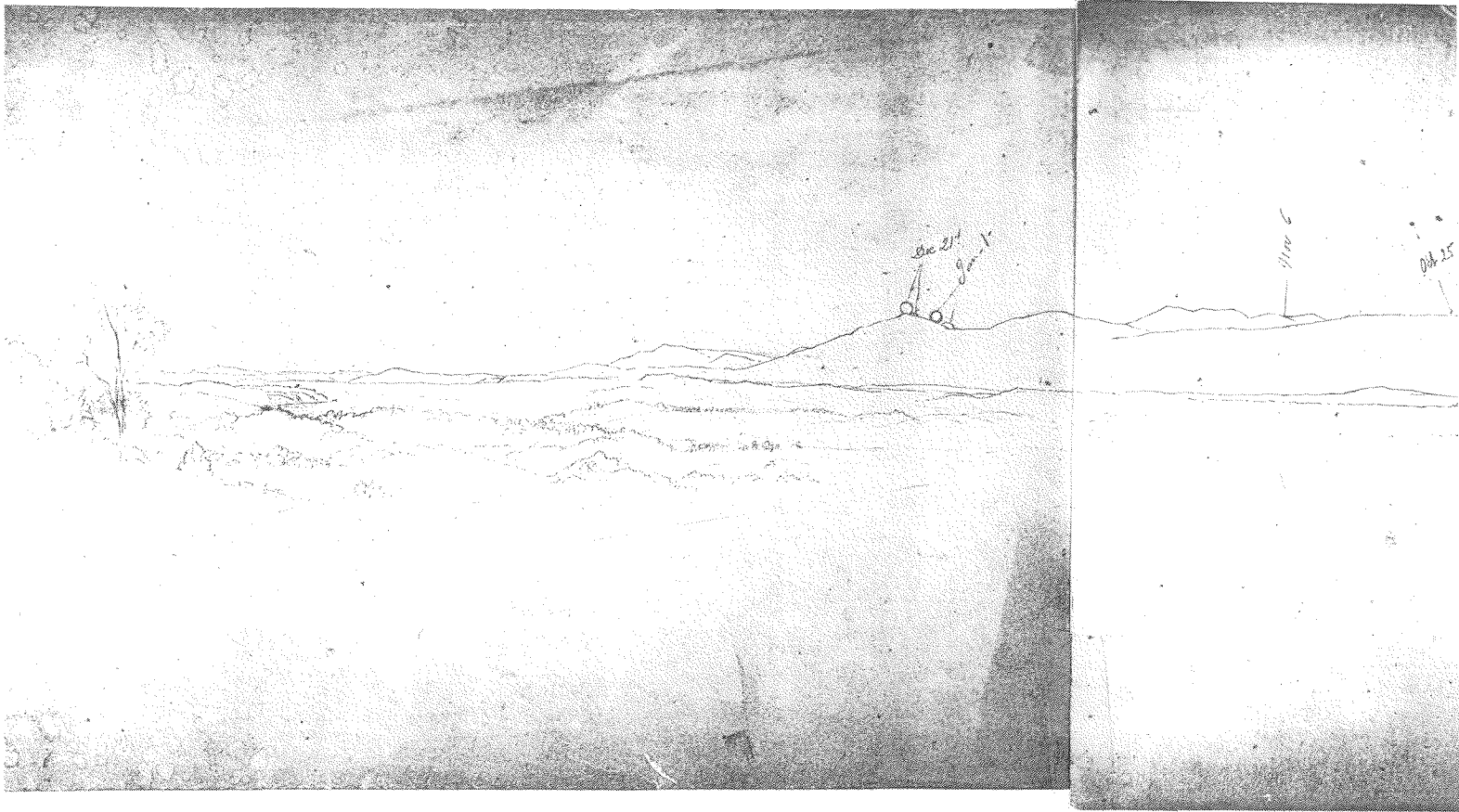


Figure 26 - Pencil Sketch, c. 1890.

The drawing, by FEC, is a portion of a panoramic sketch showing the Hudson Valley and the Catskill Mountains as seen from the House. Church used the layout to plot the horizon points where the sun set at different dates (note: "Dec. 21st" and "Jan 1" at upper right). [OL.1977.172].

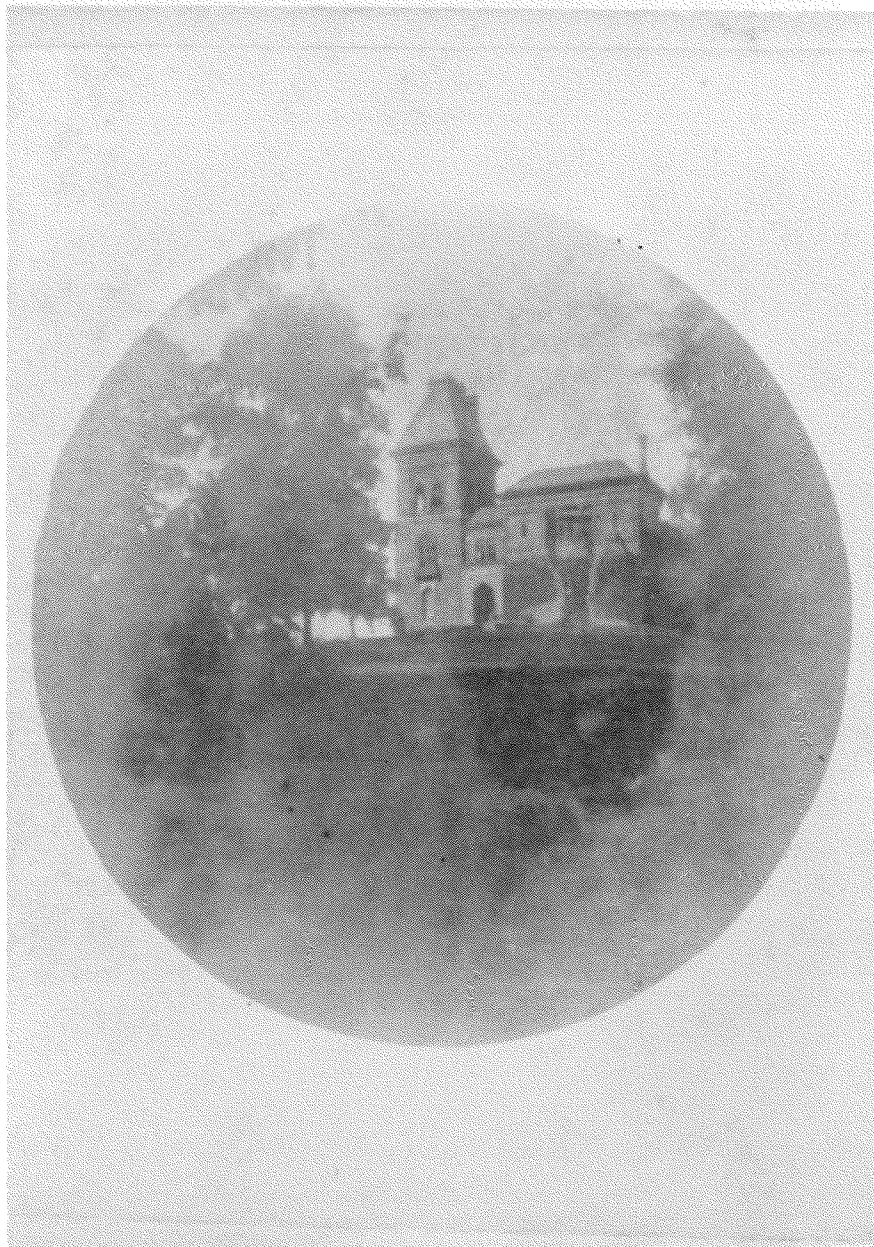


Figure 27 - Photograph, 1891.

The view, dated Sept. 30, 1891, looks west across the East Lawn from a point on the final approach drive where the House is first presented in a full and open prospect. This corresponds to the intersection of the North Road and the New Approach Road (South Road after 1889). [OL.1991.1.224].

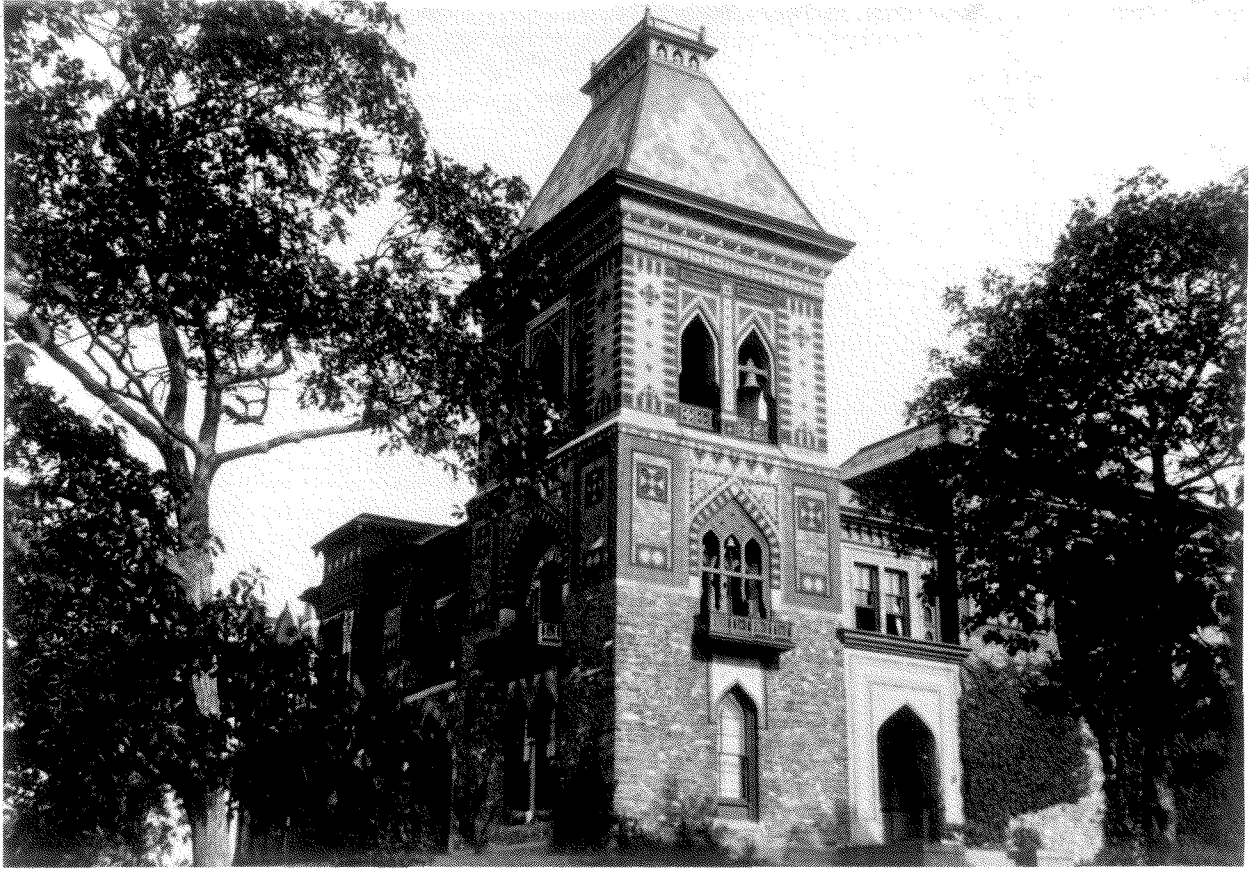


Figure 28 - Photograph of House from the southeast, c. 1890.

This view was presented as one came onto the House along the final approach drive. Note the mature trees framing the oblique view. The growth of vines contributes to integrating and anchoring the structure onto its site, while the polychromatic motifs provide an emphatic artistic effect [OL.1986.59.25].



Figure 29 - Photograph of the Stable and Stable yard from the south, c. 1900.
The view shows the area before it was partially paved with a brick surface. The low-roofed structure (left, middle ground) was a cistern. Note the many mature trees, including evergreens that were maintained to hide the service facilities. [OL.1987.64].



Figure 30 - Photograph of Louis Church with rustic railing and fern garden, c. 1890.

Louis P. Church, about age 20, is seen walking past the so-called fern garden, located below the carriage turn-around north of the House. The ferns seen here are probably ostrich feather fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*). Flowers and shrubs are also present. The turn-around was supported by a dry-laid stone wall, clearly seen here. The wall was fitted with a rustic railing fabricated from what appears to be twisted mountain laurel branches. The House is discernible in the distance. [OL.1987.378.6d].

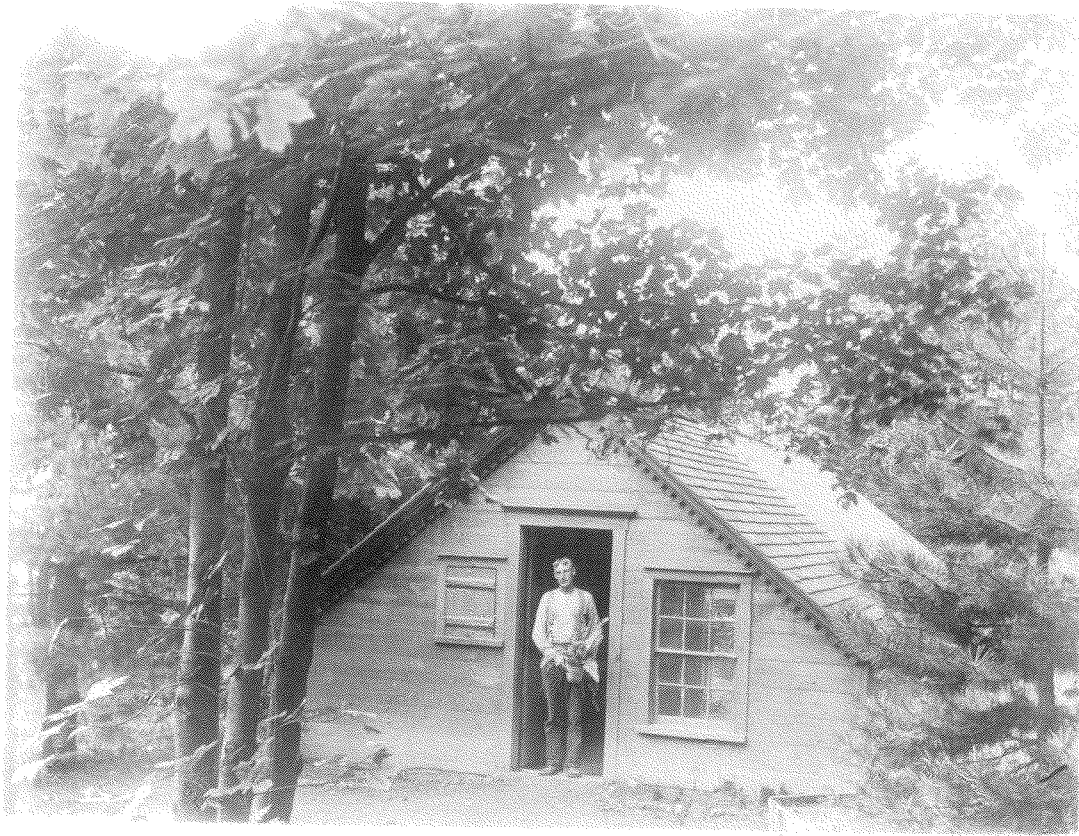


Figure 31 - Photograph of the Greenhouse from the north, 1906.

This utilitarian building was sheltered in a wooded area out of view from the House or approach roads. Note the young pine tree in the right corner. Ahead is the potting shed, with gardener Charles Frier in the doorway. The glass-roofed portion is seen beyond, opening to the south. [OL.1987.131.20.a].



Figure 32 - Photograph of New Approach Road and mingled garden from the north, 1890-1900.

The view looks south and clearly illustrates the relationship of the carriage drive to the garden, which was installed in conjunction with the road's development after 1888. Note the wire fence on wood posts, and the road surface of shale with considerable turf stubble, showing a somewhat rural and unkempt appearance. [OL. 1987.188].



Figure 33 - Photograph of South Road with birch trees, 1906.

This is one of the photographs taken by John Eberle, dated 1906. It is believed to show the South Road (looking northeast) as it approaches the switch-back turn onto the New Approach Road, seen in the distance above the dark embankment. The birch trees, planted by Church, dominated the road edges in this area. [OL.1986.424].



Figure 34 - Photograph of Lake, park and House from the south, 1890-1900.

The view looks north and shows the completed Lake with the park and House beyond. Note the scattered trees in the park. Some of these can be identified as American elms. The South Road is visible crossing below the House. The density of the foliage uphill is apparent as a more heavily treed backdrop. [OL.1987.66].



Figure 35 - Photograph of the park looking southwest, c. 1900.

The Lake is visible in the background, left. Some of the trees that are shown here are small and these suggest that there may have been ongoing plantings in the park even late in Frederic Church's lifetime. The uniform meadow grasses reflect the secondary use of the park as a hayed field and impart a distinctive, homogeneous character to the ground surface in this area [OL.1986.378.11.c].



Figure 36 - Photograph of the farm from the northwest, c. 1890.

The view looks southeast over the farm, showing areas similar to a portion of figure 37, except closer to the agricultural activities. Here the 18th-century farmhouse is seen on the right, with Blue Hill beyond. The view includes the intensely cultivated area north of the farmhouse, where various orchard trees and bush fruits grew in the so-called "farmhouse lot" and "cottage garden," just below the steep slope. Corn is also shown on the upper slopes north of Cosy Cottage, located just out of view to the right. [OL.1986.59.22].

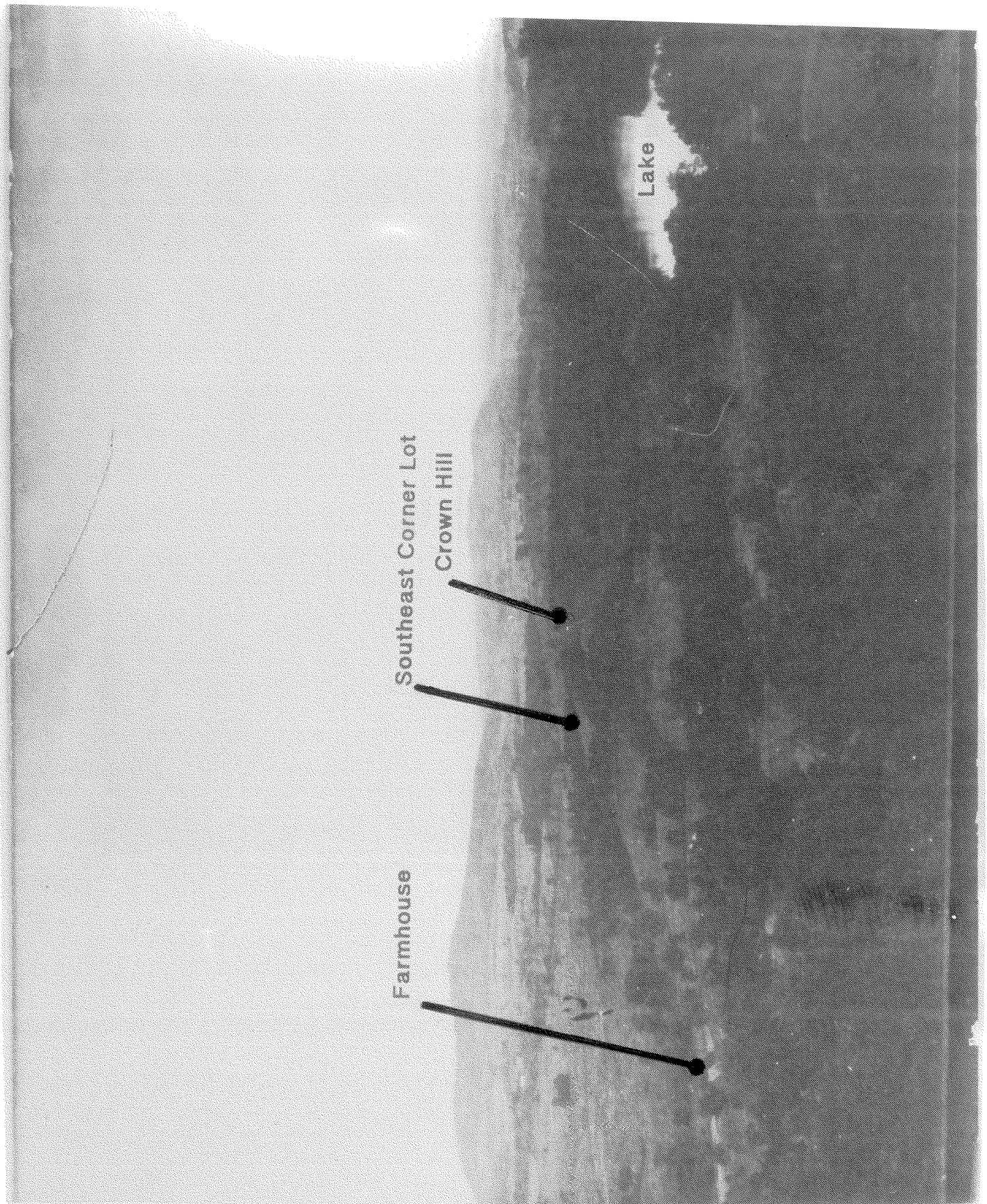


Figure 37 - Photograph, c. 1900.

The view looks southeast over the farm from the House tower. Given the maturity of the vegetation on Crown Hill (seen clearly on the original photograph), this view seems to date from at least the mid-1890's, perhaps ten years after the development of the Crown Hill Road. The southeast corner lot is clearly discernable, while the farmhouse is seen to the extreme left, with Blue Hill beyond. This view confirms the field arrangements and gives a good indication of the wooded vs. open space form of the landscape late in Church's ownership [OL.1986.432 (detail)].



Figure 38 - Photograph, pre-1890s.

View of Cosy Cottage from the southeast. This view shows the completed, vine-embowered cottage as seen approaching on the driveway. The original 1860 core is ahead, with the later west wing seen on the left. Note the hammock between the trees opposite the entrance [OL.1986.59.2].



Figure 39 - Photograph of Cosy Cottage from the southeast, 1906.

This John Eberle view shows the southeast corner of the cottage. The elaborate birdhouse is clearly seen. A large lilac shrub dominates the corner. Note how the service drive continues to the north (service) side of the building. [OL.1987.131.23.a].



Figure 40 - Photograph of driveway to Cosy Cottage from the east, 1906.

Another Eberle photograph showing the maple tree-lined driveway built by Church to give access to the cottage, separated from the lower Farm Road (left). In the distance, left, is the screened pump house. [OL.1987.131.21.a].



Figure 41 - Photograph of the North Road from the south, 1906.

The Eberle photograph is taken at the point where the lower Farm Road (foreground, right) joins the North Road. Ahead, a half-mile away is the North Entrance, while the North Road turned uphill, to the left, from this intersection. Note the density of the woods and the rough, rural appearance of the roadway. [OL.1987.131.36.a].



Figure 42 - Photograph of the farmhouse from the northwest, 1906.

The 1794 farmhouse, with the west addition added by Church in 1869 clearly visible, is seen from the vantage point near Cosy Cottage. In the foreground is the so-called "cottage garden," fenced from the surrounding orchards. The fruit trees seen in the background, left, are in the so-called "farmhouse lot." On the original photo, corn stalks can also be detected in that area. South of the farmhouse, in a low swale, is a white feature that appears to be a water pump. [OL.1987.131.22.a].

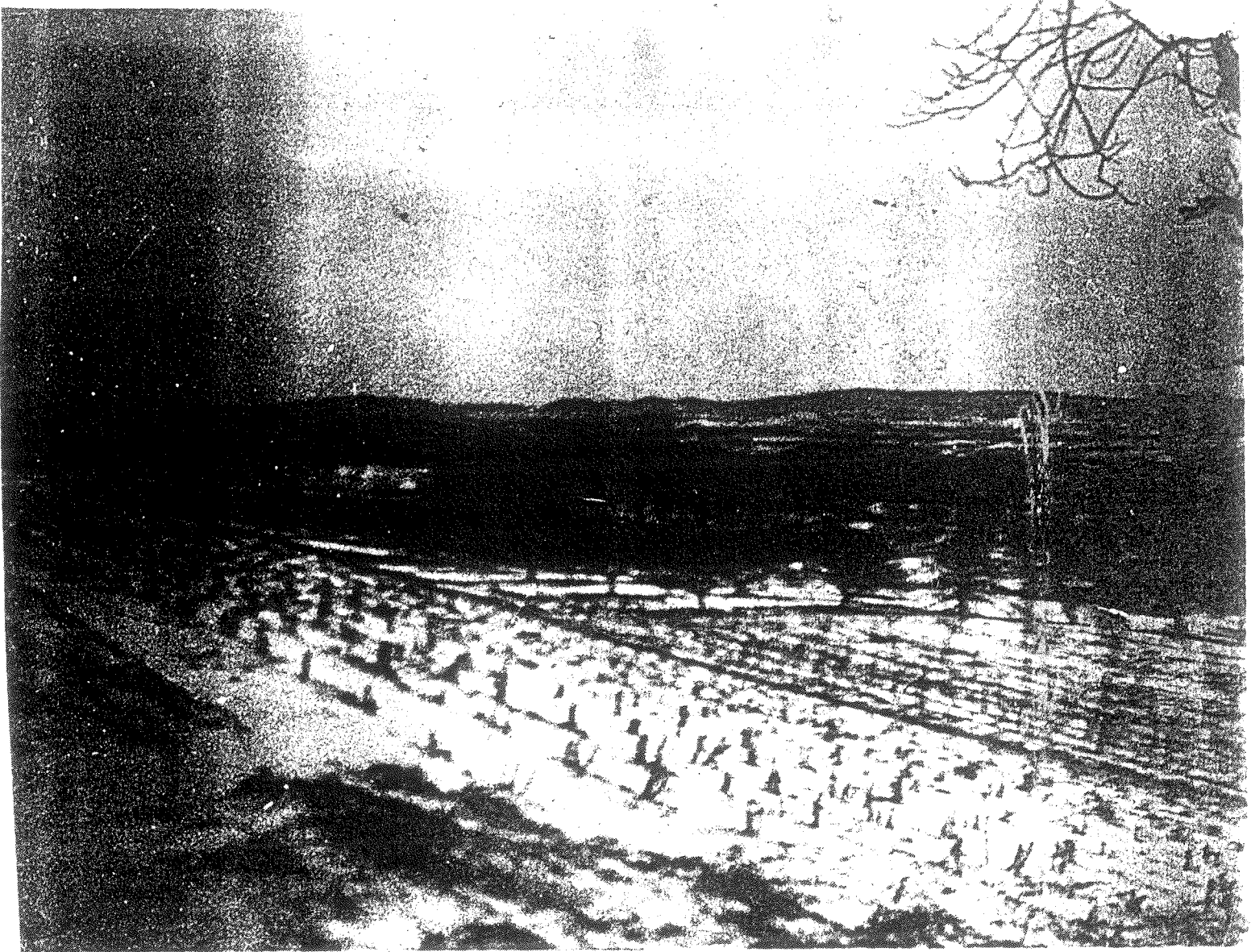
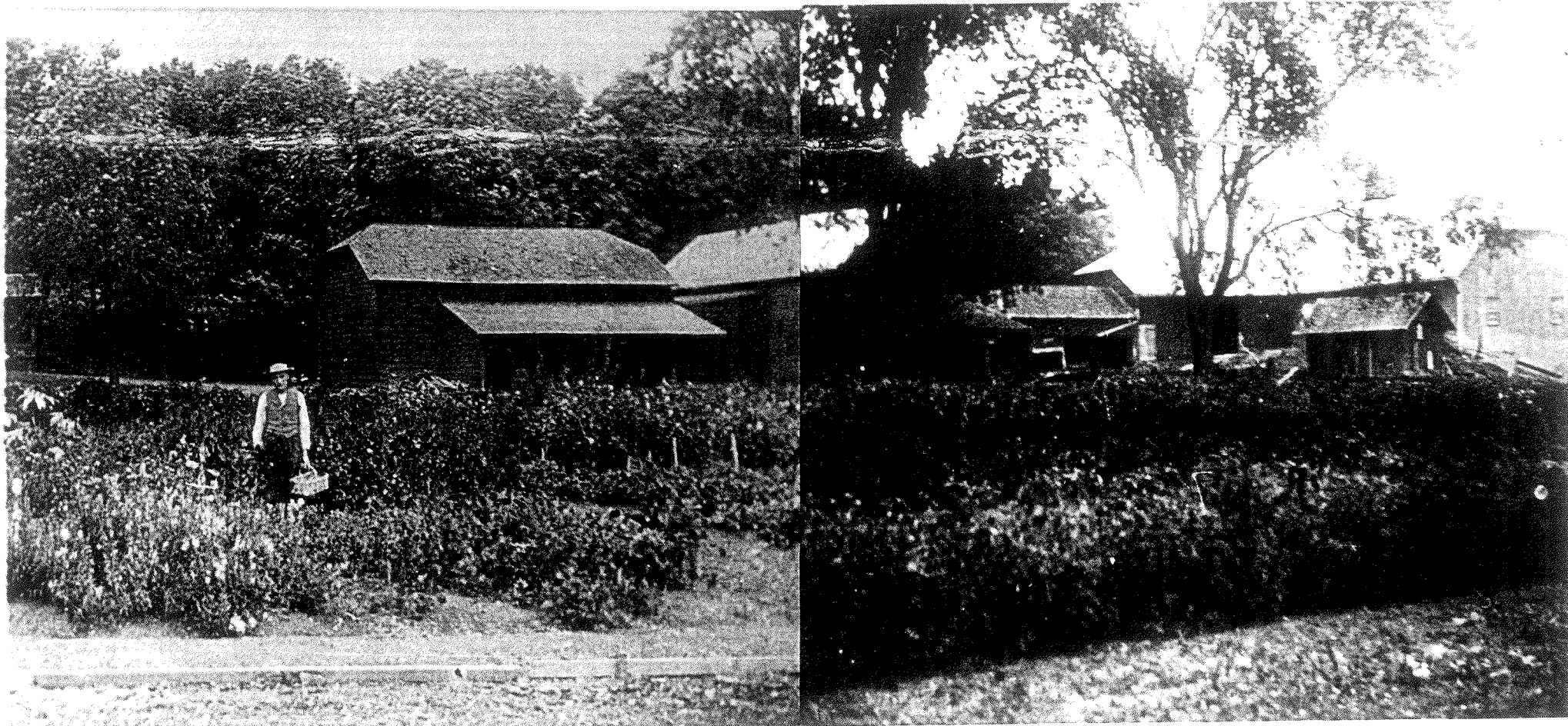


Figure 43 - Photograph, 1896-1914.

View looking northeast overlooking the north orchard. Although not definitively dated and a decidedly blurry image, this is the best available photograph of the large orchard area that dominated the north end of the Brezie farm parcel. The view was taken with a light snow cover, so that some surface conditions are hidden. The fenced area seen on the right was used for grape and bush fruits -- the so-called "cottage garden." The corn stubble remains from a crop harvested along the sloping ground directly north of the cottage. [OL.1987.133.11.h].

Figure 44 - Photographs of Kitchen Garden and farm buildings from the south, c. 1906.



These two views, taken from the same point though at different dates, have been spliced together here to show the entire barn/kitchen garden area as it looked just after Church's death. From the right (east to west) the buildings shown include the 1899 dairy Barn attached to the older Barn, with attached sheds on the west. In front is the diminutive, so-called "Coachman's House," possibly used as a garden shed or tool house at this date. The Barnyard is seen behind to the left. An elm tree stands in front of the Barnyard. The next building is the farm Stable and attached wagon house, with its jerkin-head (clipped) gables. In this view, there is an attached sheds on the south side of the wagon house. A large elm tree hides the farm Stable to some extent. Finally, at the extreme left (out of view) is the pump house, with attached saw mill (seen here). [OL.1987.131.32.a (left) and OL.1987.132.16.b (right)].



Figure. 45 - Photograph of view from Crown Hill looking north, c. 1890.

The view looks north from Crown Hill. This blurry image (the original is a tiny one inch square positive) represents the only known illustration of this important viewpoint. It was taken after 1889, probably in the early 1890s, five years at least after the development of the Crown Hill Road and overlook in 1885. At that time, former pastures, seen here in the foreground, had been allowed to return to second growth, resulting in the scattered appearance. With the House shown on the distant hilltop, the view features the farm in the middle distance. The main Barn, with its characteristic jerkin-head gables, is seen at center right. The Kitchen Garden is faintly seen to the west (left of the Barn). Note the large structure, directly below the House, with its gable end toward the viewer. This is the Ice House. [OL.1987.307].

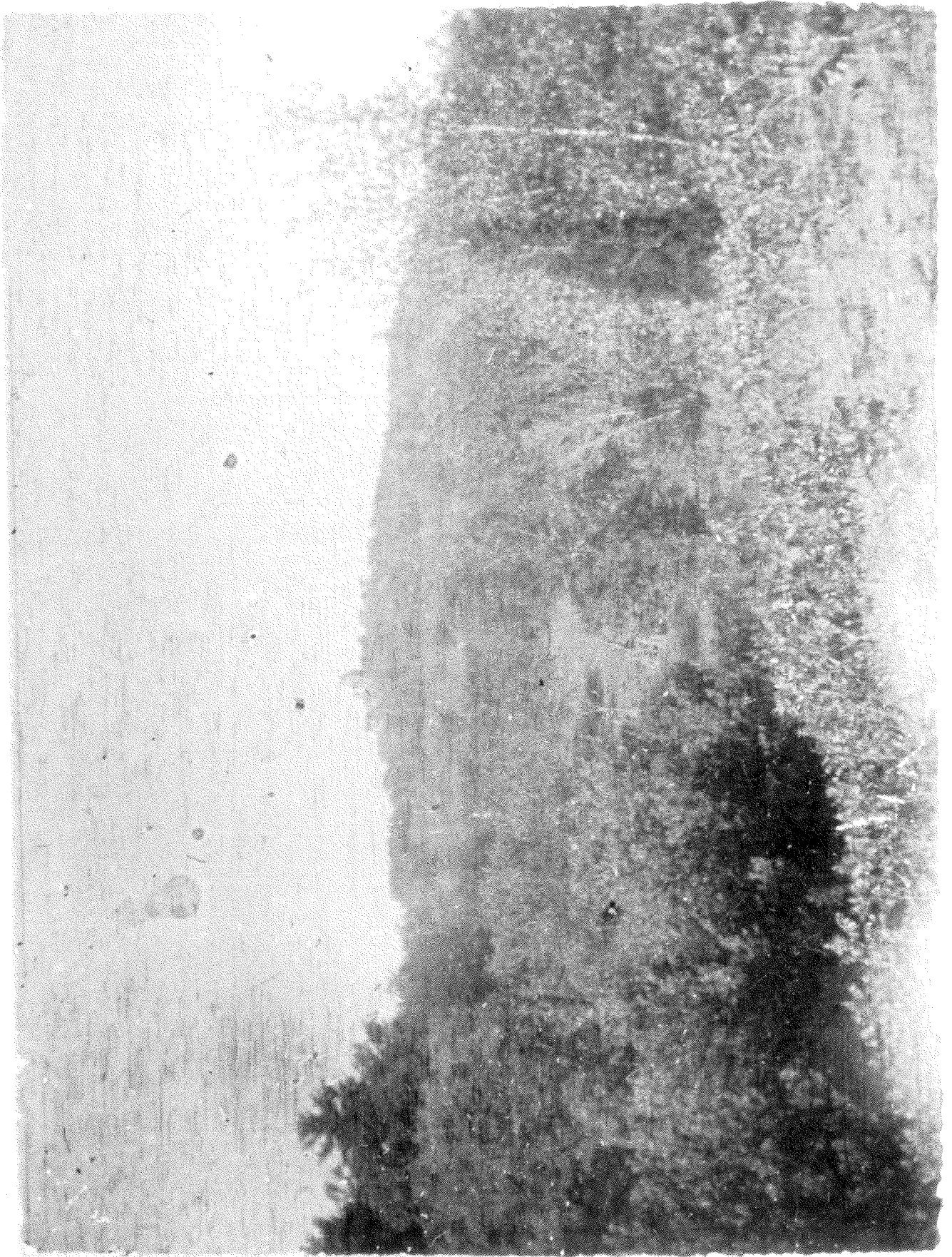


Figure 46 - Photograph of view from Crown Hill Road looking north, c. 1890.

This is a companion to the previous image showing a view from the newly installed Crown Hill Road at a point west of the summit where the topography and emerging vegetation screen the farm buildings. Again, note the second-growth trees and shrubs in the foreground. This prospect is today obliterated by rampant trees. [OL.1987.305].



Figure 47 - Photograph showing South Entrance, 1896-1914.

The view looks north from Red Hill (just south of Olana), showing the South Entrance at the extreme lower right. The Oak Hill-Hudson Road (today Rt. 9G) is shown clearly on its pre-1930s alignment. The public road was realigned in the 1930s to the field seen here west of the older road. [OL.1987.132.13.c].



Figure 48 - Photograph showing the north meadow, 1900.

This view looks north from Ridge Road across the north meadow. The photograph was taken after 1884, when the Ridge Road was constructed at the highest elevation of the north meadow and a fence line, shown here, was installed below the road. The land between, the foreground here, could have been allowed to return selectively to second growth but this does not seem to have happened in this area. Four older trees, two in the foreground and two in the open field, lower right where the photograph is torn, are still standing. Prominent in the distance is the Sabine/Ferguson house. The North Road entered the property below this house and wound its way through the wooded corridor seen here along the eastern edge of the meadow. [OL.1986.378.23.c].



Figure 50 - Photograph of view from the Ridge Road, 1906.

The view looks west from the Ridge Road showing the open aspect that Church maintained along this portion of the road. Older wooded areas are seen to the south (left). One small sapling, seen beside the road (left of center), is today a mature field tree set in second-growth woods that developed after Church's death [OL.1986.59.29].



Figure 51 - Photograph of western view from Ridge Road, 1895-1910.

This image looks west from the Ridge Road at a point where the road emerges from the woods into the open north meadow. Note the second growth of sumac and pine. As this vegetation began to obscure the views, Church undertook selective clearing to enhance the scene. The large white building in the view is the Prospect Park House Hotel at the Village of Catskill [OL.1986.426].



Figure 52 - Photograph of rustic tête-a-tête seat, late 1880s - early 1890s.

Louis P. Church, about age 18, is shown sitting on a unique piece of rustic furniture that appears to be constructed of mountain laurel with a timber slab seat. The seat was probably located along the Ridge Road on the west side of the hill at a spot where the ground dropped precipitously and the road was supported by a low stone retaining wall, today collapsed. The seat may have featured a view west, with Church selectively clearing trees and limbs to compose a particularly scenic prospect. Note the hemlock trees, an old specimen on the left and a young sapling close to the road on the right. [OL 1986.425].



Figure 53 - Photograph of 20th-century flower garden, c. 1920s ?

This view shows the House as backdrop for an elaborate garden developed on the East Lawn by Louis and Sally Church after Frederic Church's death. The brick water basin, with water lilies visible, is a centerpiece. The statue (Sleep by Erastus Dow Palmer) was displayed indoors during Church's lifetime. Brick walks are seen in the foreground. This garden has since been removed by New York State. [OL.1987.251].

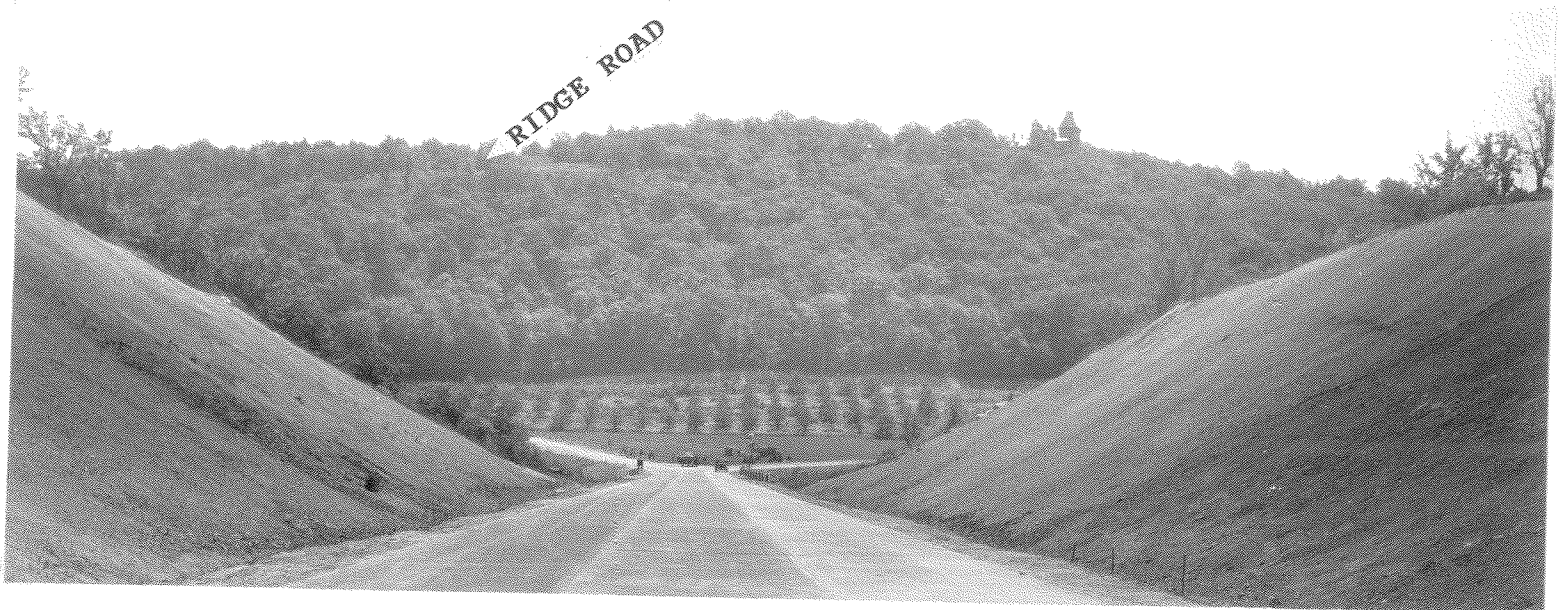
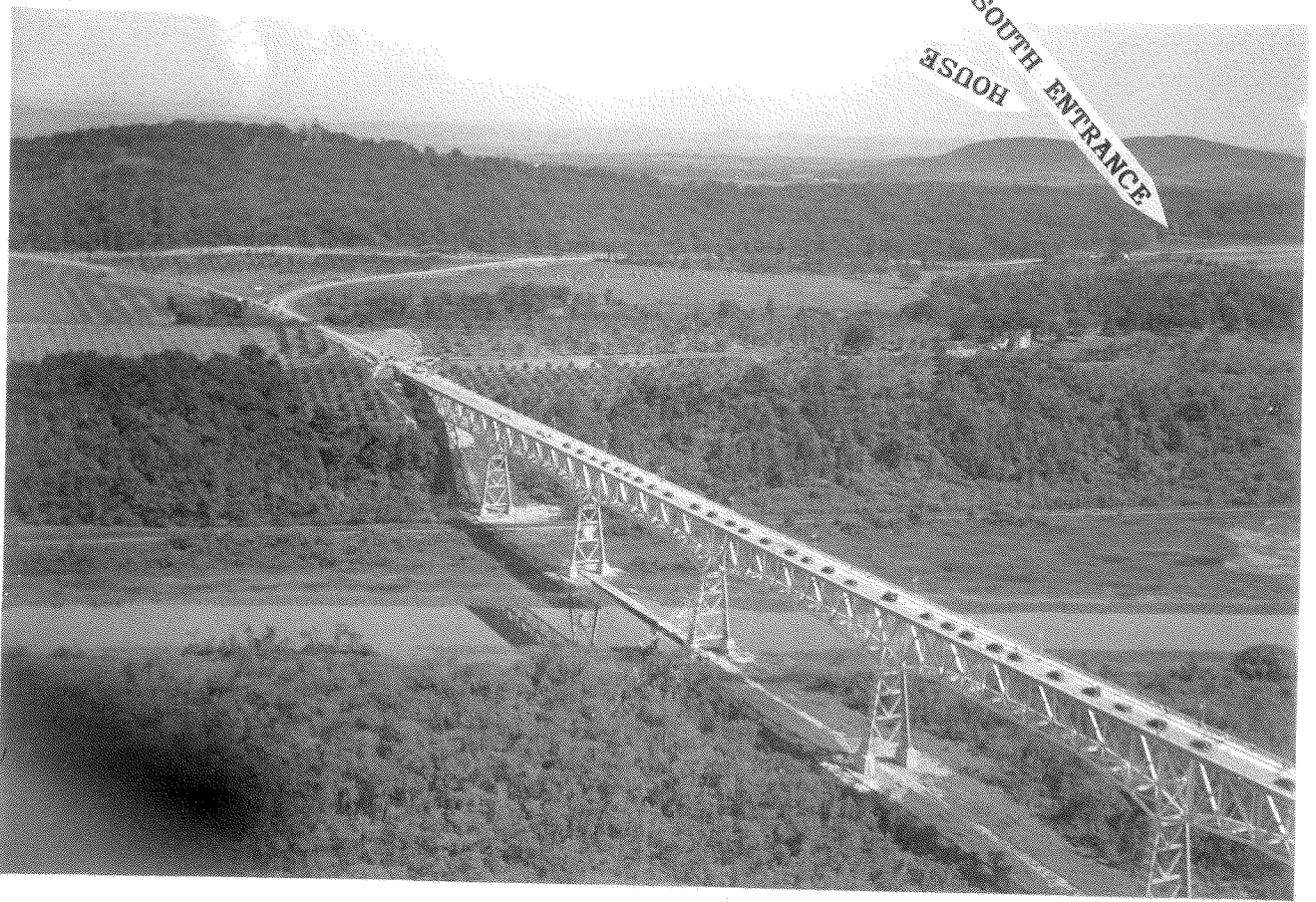


Figure 54 - Photographs showing Rip Van Winkle Bridge, 1934.

The above photograph was taken at the dedication of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. The views show Olana in the background as it was before Louis Church's death. Notable is the open landscape along the Ridge Road (best seen in the lower view, left from the House), and the inclusion of the South Entrance (difficult to see on the copy) that is not shown elsewhere. [New York State Museum Archive].

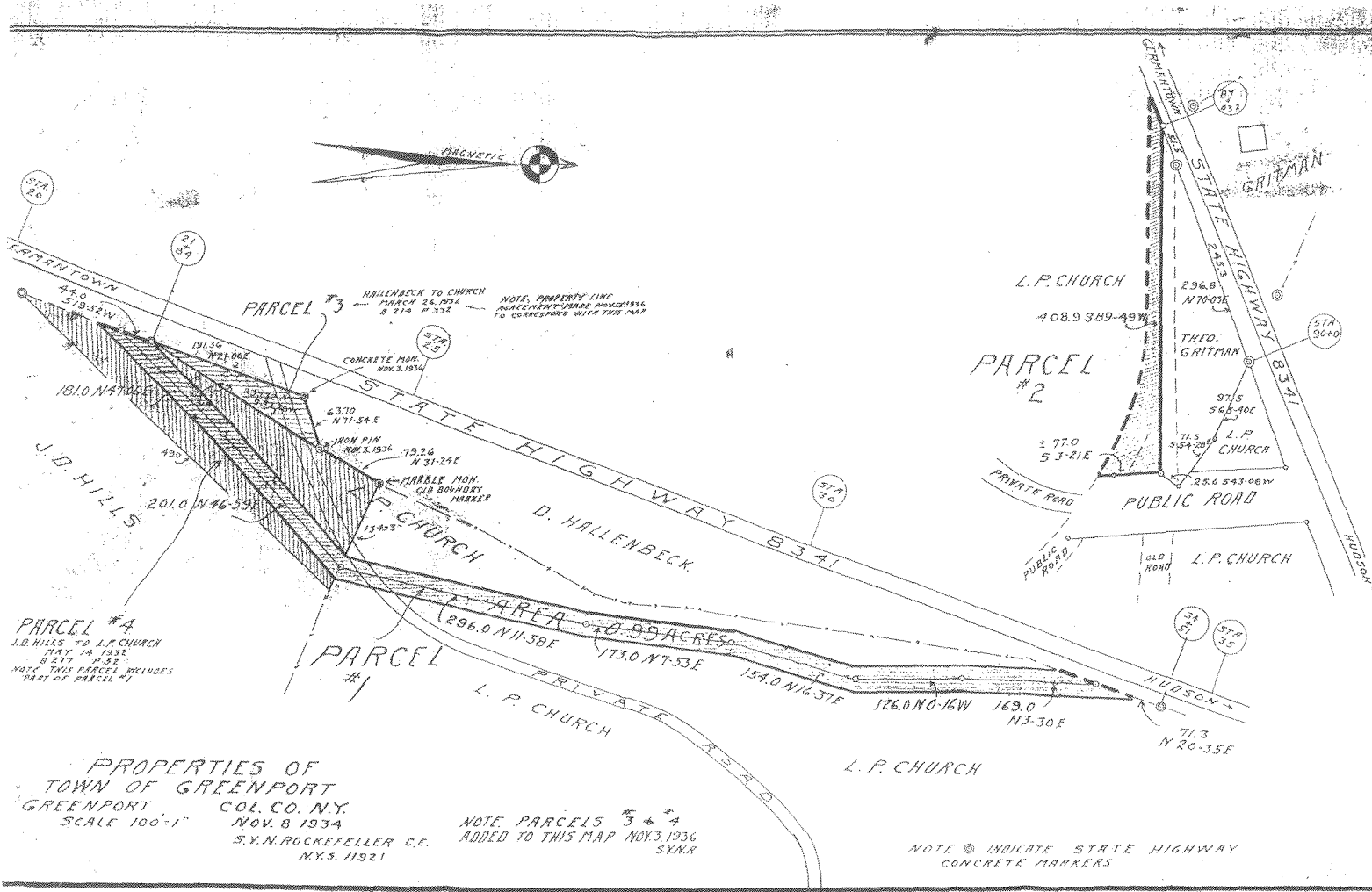
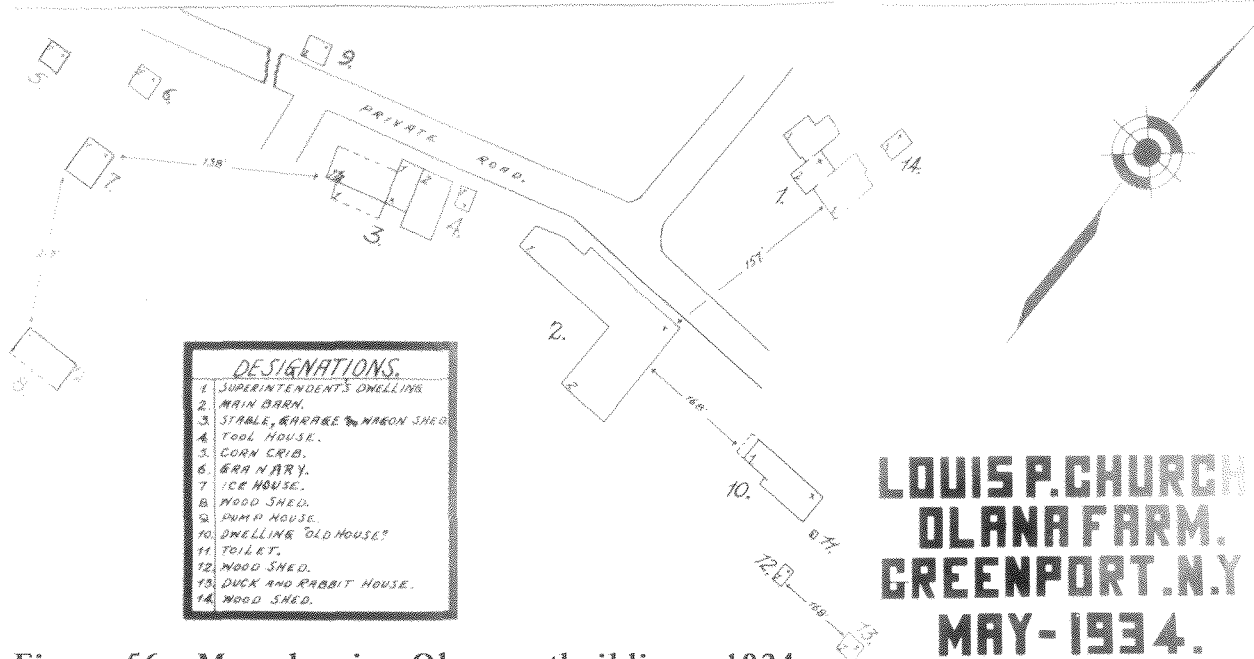


Figure 55 - Plan showing South and North Entrances, 1934/1936.

Entitled: "Properties of [Louis Church] / Town of Greenport, " by S.V.N. Rockefeller, C.E., This map shows Olana's South Entrance on the lower left, with cross-hatched pattern representing alterations needed so that Olana's entrance could reach the "State Highway." The old road corridor, labeled here "AREA 0.99 ACRES" was sold to Louis Church, but the lot labeled "D. Hallenbeck" remained, later to be developed as a restaurant. Olana's North Entrance is shown on the plan, above right. Here, Olana's "PRIVATE ROAD" was suddenly bypassed when the "STATE HIGHWAY" was realigned, necessitating an appendage labeled "PUBLIC ROAD." [OL.1996.1].



**LOUIS P. CHURCH
OLANA FARM.
GREENPORT, N.Y.
MAY - 1934.**

Figure 56 - Map showing Olana outbuildings, 1934.

This map and the following eleven illustrations (Figures 57-67) are from: "Insurance Report on property of L.P. Church at Greenport, N.Y.," prepared by Lukens, Savage & Washburn, 7/18/1934. The map and photographs, together with measured plans of each building, constitute the most complete record of the farm outbuildings as they existed before the removal of many of these structures beginning in the 1950s. Of the buildings shown on the map, the "wood shed" (#8) is the only one not documented as in place during Frederic Church's lifetime. Two structures thought to have been in existence during Church's residence are not shown. First, the Earth Cellar (root cellar), whose presumed foundation is located between the granary (#6) and Ice House (#7); and second, a Coachman's House, located southwest from the main Barn (#2) near the upper right corner of the black border that frames the "Designations" box. [OL.1996.1].



Figure 57 - Photograph of Cosy Cottage from the southwest, 1934.

The illustration is the most detailed view available for the western wing of the cottage. Also, the trees (the pine and curving trunk behind it, left of center; and the three to the right of the car) can be compared with the earlier view (compare with Figure 38). The ornamental trappings (e.g., vines and bird house) that so distinguished the romantic *cottage ornée* were at this date reduced to the austere orderliness of the house of Olana's farmer. [OL.1996.1].



Figure 58 - Photograph of farmhouse from the northwest, 1934.

The old farmhouse appears to have been in good condition in 1934. As at Cosy Cottage, the fittings are more austere than earlier views (compare with Figure 42). Note the large pine tree, and the fruit tree. Other orchard trees are seen to the south of the house [OL.1996.1].

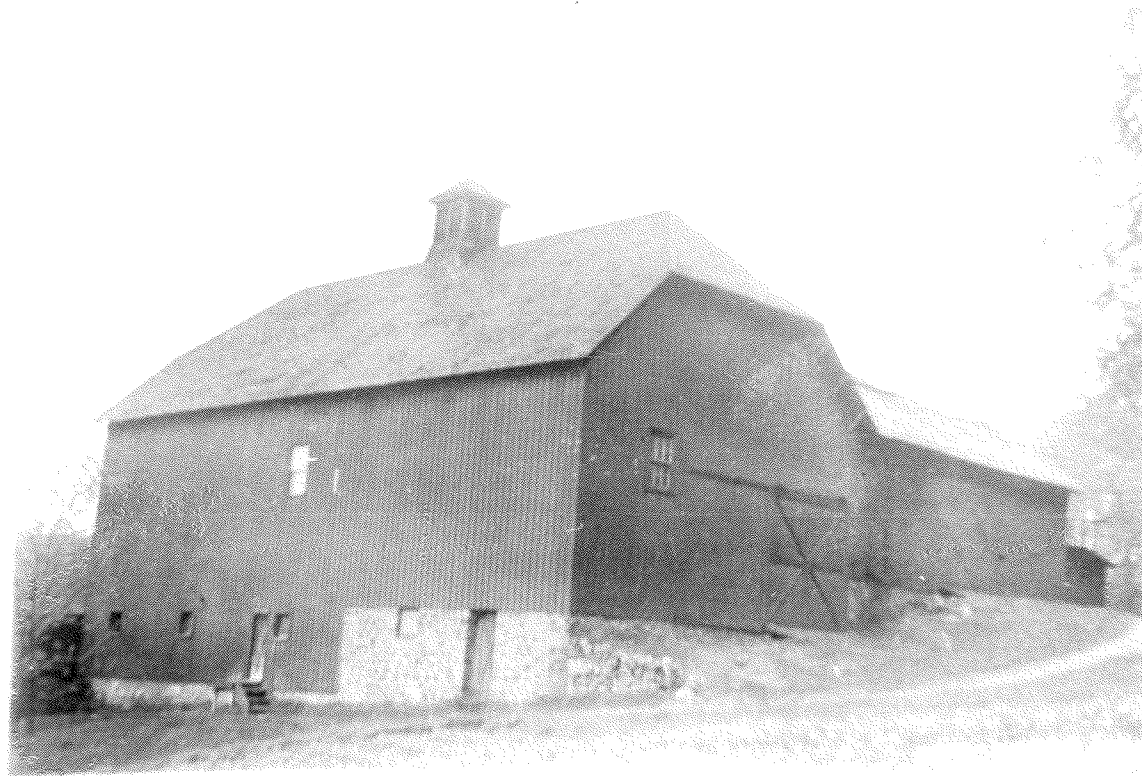


Figure 59 - Photograph of the barn from the northeast, 1934.

The large dairy barn (75'x35'), built in 1899, is seen in the foreground, with the older smaller barn (35'x28') attached on the west, on higher ground. Attached sheds are visible beyond. [OL.1996.1].



Figure 60 - Photograph of tool house from the north, 1934.

It is uncertain if this small building (13'x10'-6") was in place during Frederic Church's lifetime, but it seems that it was moved to this location at some point after his death (see below). [OL.1996.1].



Figure 61 - Photograph of tool house, farm Stable and wagon house from the north, 1934.

The tool house is on the left. After a gap (closed with a gate) the gable end of the farm Stable is seen through the foliage. Continuing west, there is a linking building and then the wagon house, with eave line running east-west. The farm Stable and wagon house complex was in place during Church's lifetime (compare with Figure 44). The grove of trees in the foreground seems to have been planted to screen the farm buildings from the park [OL.1996.1].

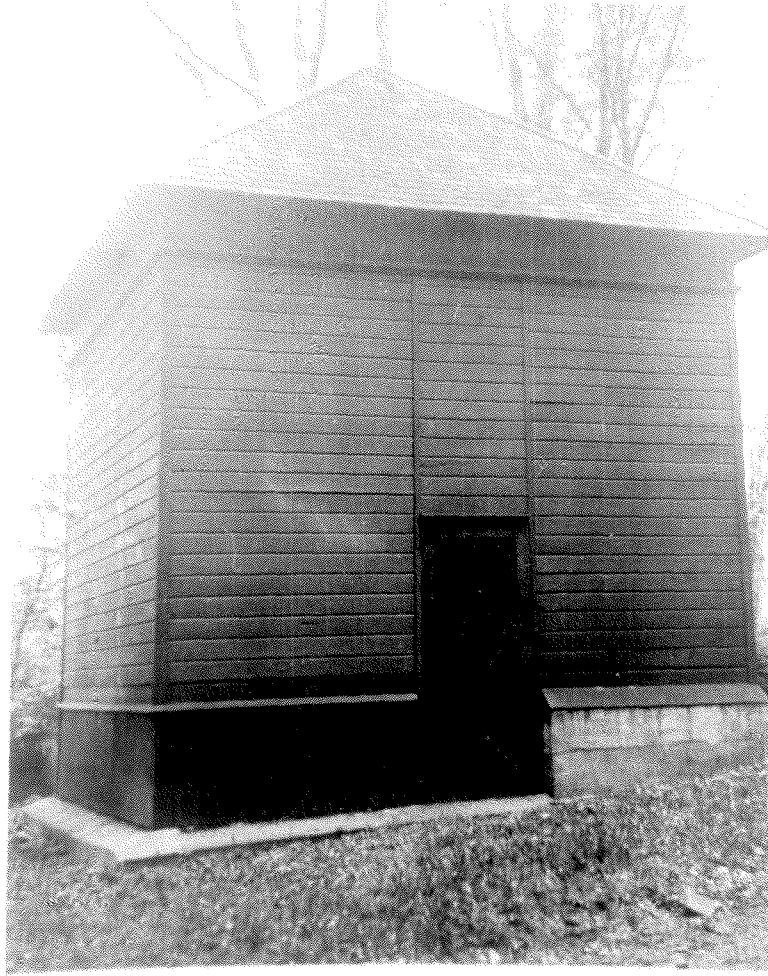


Figure 62 - Photograph of granary from the north, 1934.

This small structure (16'-6" square) was not mentioned during Church's lifetime. It was located opposite the pump house (Figure 63, below). The details of its use in Church's farm operation are unknown but considerable grain was grown on the property, especially in the earlier years of Church's ownership. [OL.1996.1].

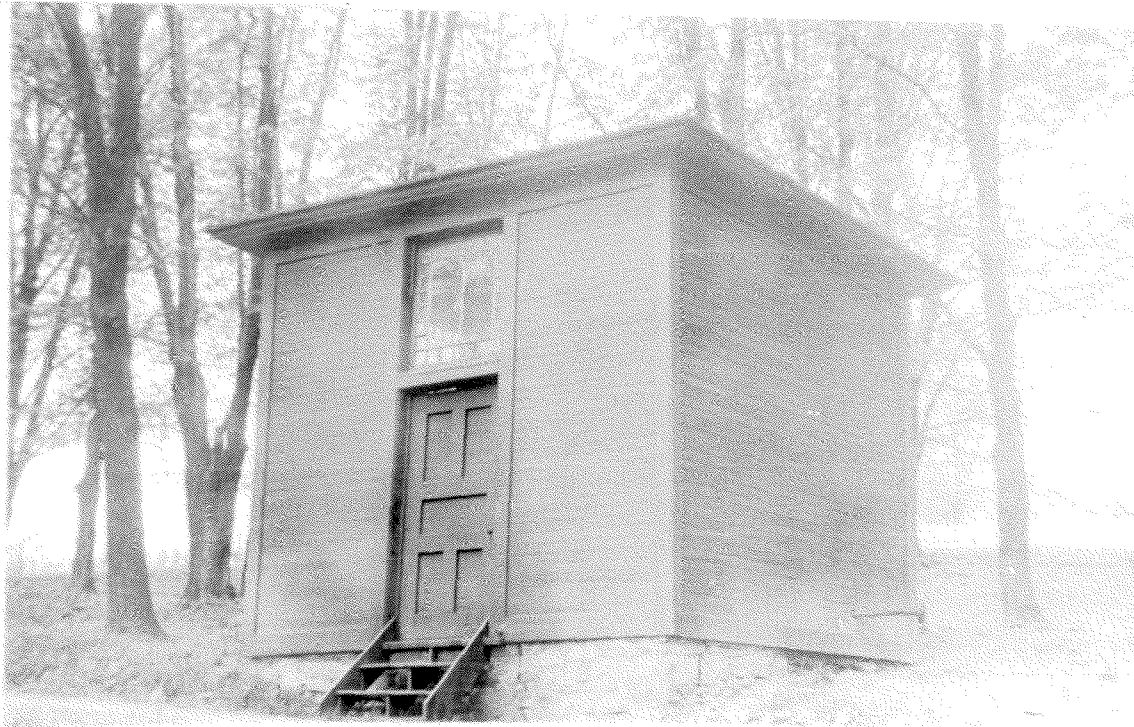


Figure 63 - Photograph of pump house from the southeast, 1934.

Located close to the granary, this was also a square structure (15'-3" square). Initially, when the pump housed in this structure was powered by steam, there was a saw mill and wood storage area on the east (right) side of this building (see Figure 44). It had been removed (and an electric pump installed) prior to 1934. [OL.1996.1].



Figure 64 - Photograph of Corn Crib from the southeast, 1934.

The Corn Crib was located on the eastern side of the Lake dam. The road around the Lake was apparently aligned east (to the left) of this building, with the Lake to the west (right). It is unclear if the building seen in the photograph (15'-4" square) is the same as that recorded as having a straw roof in Church's lifetime. [OL.1996.1].



Figure 65 - Photograph of Ice House from the south, 1934.

A rather unusual building to serve as the ice house, this was a sizable (26'x20') two-story structure. An interior basement was apparently excavated to a depth of about 16 feet below grade. The double post supports seen to the west of the building may have been used in moving ice from the Lake. The prominent gable end of the building is seen from Crown Hill (fig. 45). [OL.1996.1].



Figure 66 - Photograph of the Stable and coachman's dwelling from the southeast, 1934.

The complex is shown after the alteration brought about by the introduction of the automobile, which was first owned by Louis Church in about 1901. Note the large tree on the right. [OL.1996.1].



Figure 67 - Photograph of House from the north, 1934.

This view is not documented in photographs from Frederic Church's lifetime. It shows the placement of trees in the service yard formed in the "L" of the main House. Trees (notably the three to the left of the car) defined the shale surface. At this date it seems that the ground vegetation had been extensively cleared in this area. [OL.1996.1].



Figure 68 - Aerial Photograph, 1942.

This is the earliest known aerial view of Olana. Taken just prior to Louis Church's death in 1943, it shows the extent of field abandonment at this date and also the details of landscape elements, such as orchards and the Kitchen Garden, not revealed in later aerial photographs. Note, the open park and cleared shoreline on the north side of the Lake. The New Approach Road is shown in use, but the uphill Farm Road has been reduced to a turfed track, nearly indiscernible. Annotations on the property west of Olana are from a soil map, the only known source of this image. North is at the top of the page. [USDA, Soil Conservation Service, Hudson, NY].



Figure 69 - Aerial Photograph, 4/26/1967.

This important view documents the "as received" conditions of Olana when the State acquired the property. It clearly shows the construction of the State's paved road system installed before Olana opened to the public only five weeks after this aerial photograph was taken. Changes in the landscape since Louis Church's death are also apparent and the springtime foliage documents the pattern of evergreen and deciduous trees in considerable detail. North is at the top of the page. [USDA, Soil Conservation Service, Hudson, NY].



Figure 70 - Aerial Photograph, 1980.

This view records the situation thirteen years after State acquisition. Woodland vegetation continues to encroach along the edges of formerly open fields, especially notable in the southeast corner of the property. A narrow viewway cleared from Crown Hill in the 1970s is visible in the lower center. North is up the page. [USDA, Soil Conservation Service, Hudson, NY].

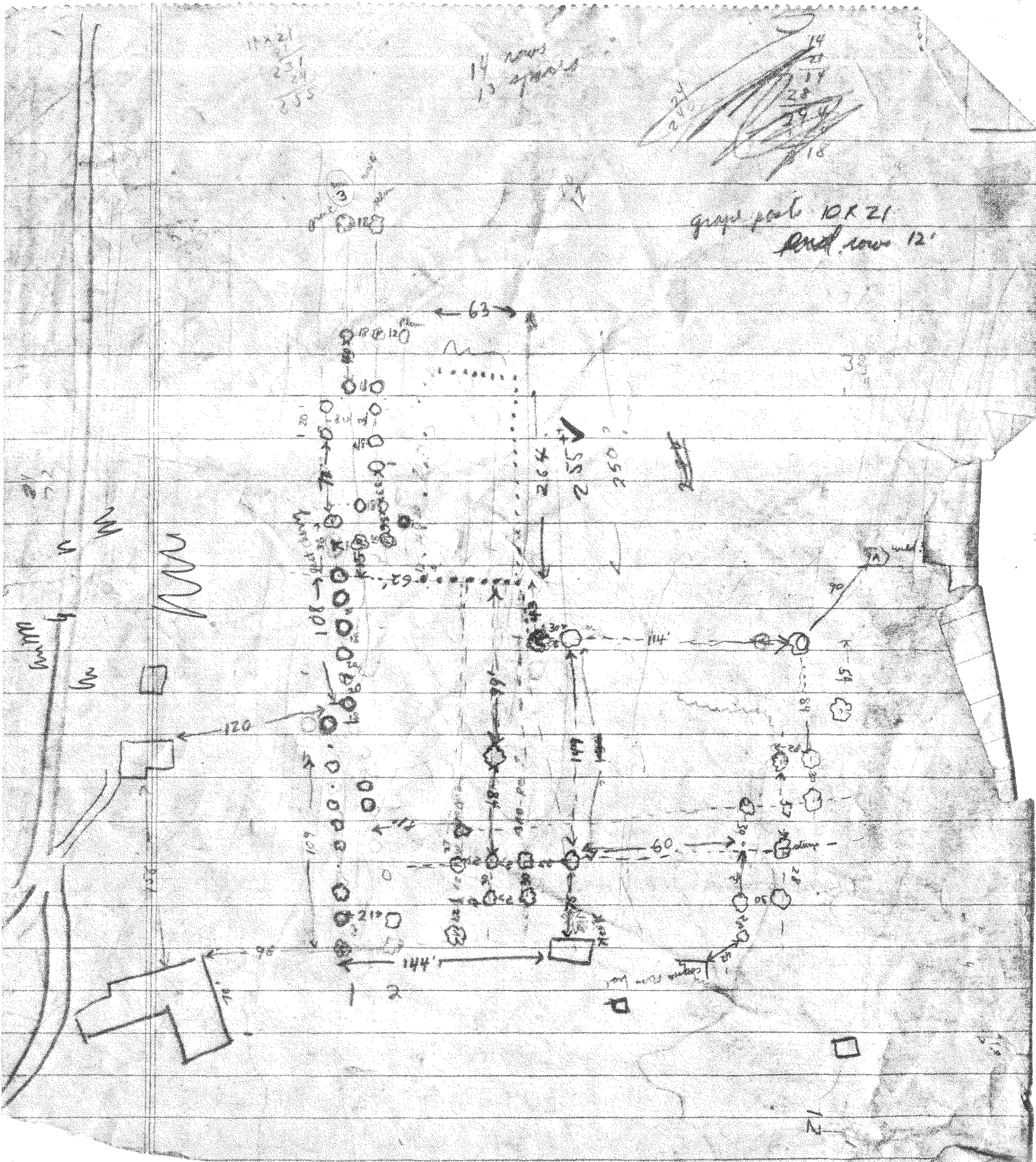
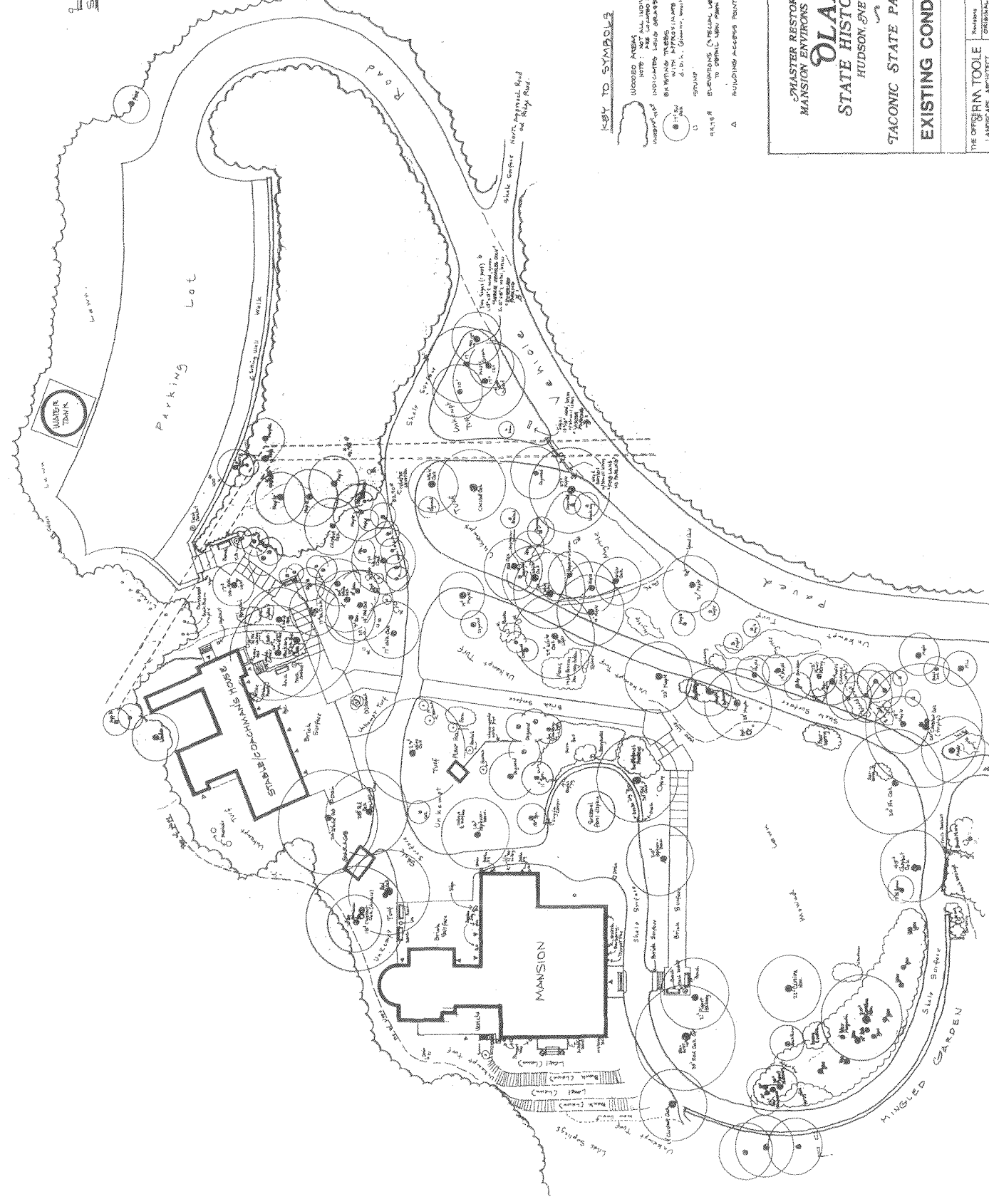


Figure 71 - Map showing part of the farm, 1975.

This plan was prepared by David Spier, groundsman at Olana, as part of an inventory of the farm vegetation. It shows the plantings extant in the cottage garden, as well as fruit trees remaining in orchards close to the farmhouse (lower center) and Cosy Cottage (left above large Barn). North is at the top of the page. [OSHS].



9 1/2" = 100' ft
 SCALE



KEY TO SYMBOLS

UNCOLORED AREA
 SITE: NOT ALL INDIVIDUAL TREES
 INDICATED. LEAD LINES TO INDICATE
 BRANCHING TREES
 WITH PROJECTIONS BEHIND AND
 AHEAD (Dotted, not solid lines)

○ TREE
 ○ GROUP

▲ BUILDING ACCESS POINTS

MASTER RESTORATION PLAN
 MANSION ENVIRONS (Phase IV, Part 1)

OLANA
 STATE HISTORIC SITE
 HUDSON, NEW YORK

TACONIC STATE PARK COMMISSION

EXISTING CONDITIONS - 1988

DATE: 7/15/88
 SCALE: 1" = 20'

PROJECT	7/15/88	SHEET NO.	OF 10
DESIGNER	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT	DATE	7/15/88
CLIENT	TACONIC STATE PARK COMMISSION	PROJECT NO.	1000000000
LOCATION	300 REEFY STREET SAKATOGA SPRINGS NY 12885	PROJECT NO.	1000000000

Figure 72 - Plan showing existing conditions in House environs, 1988. This plan details the existing conditions near the House ("Mansion"). Note the State installed walk (labeled "Brick Surface") that leads from the parking lot to the House entrance porch. ["Master Landscape Restoration Plan - Mansion Environs (Phase IV, Part 1)," 7/15/1988].

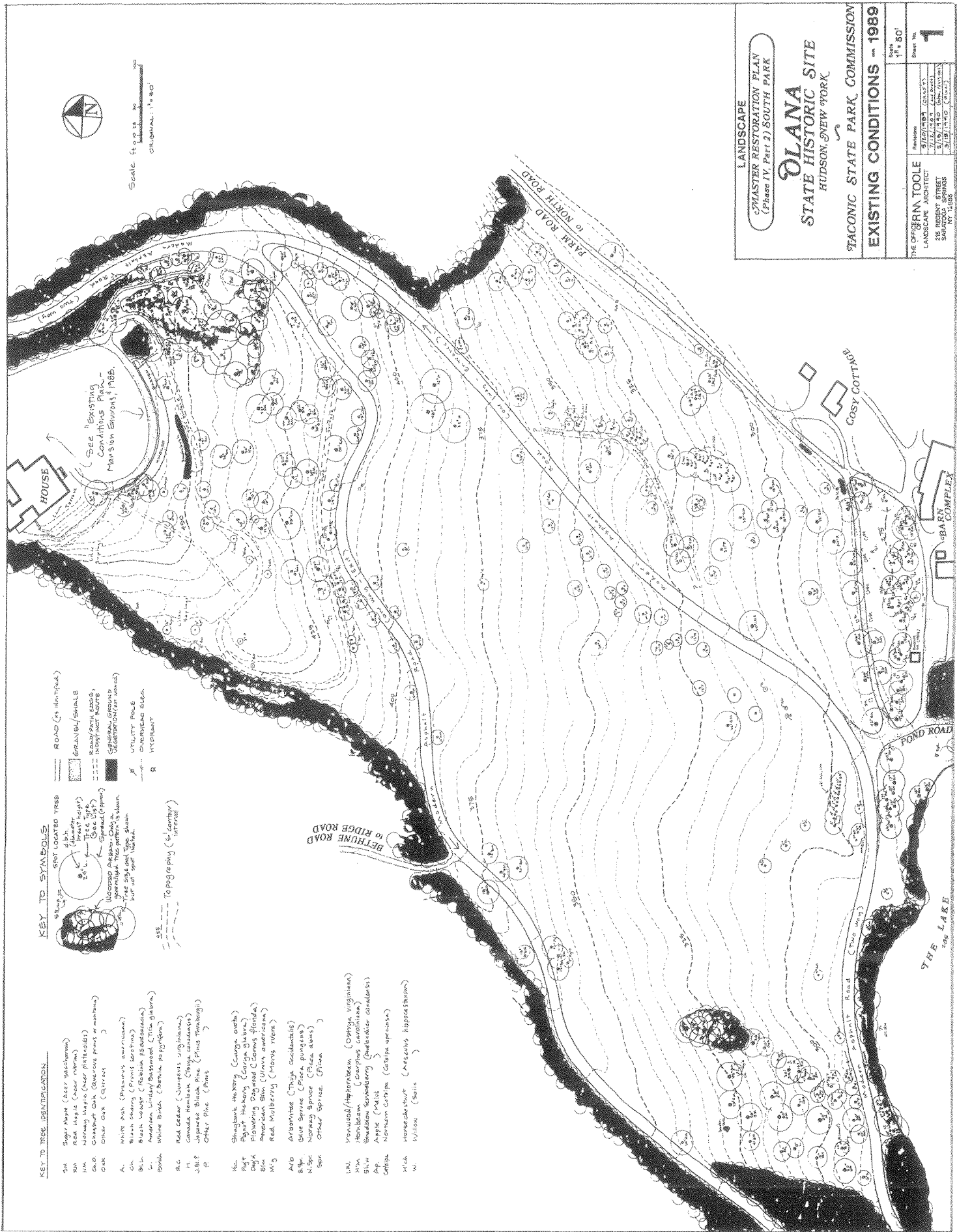


Figure 74 - Plan showing existing conditions in park, 1989.

The plan documents the park boundaries, with the black border representing woodland edges. The State-installed paved road system dominates, in places having been overlaid on carriage drives present in Frederic Church's lifetime. In some cases the tree pattern is a mix of historic remnants and newer State plantings. ["Master Landscape Restoration Plan - South Park (Phase IV, Part 2)," 3/15/1990].

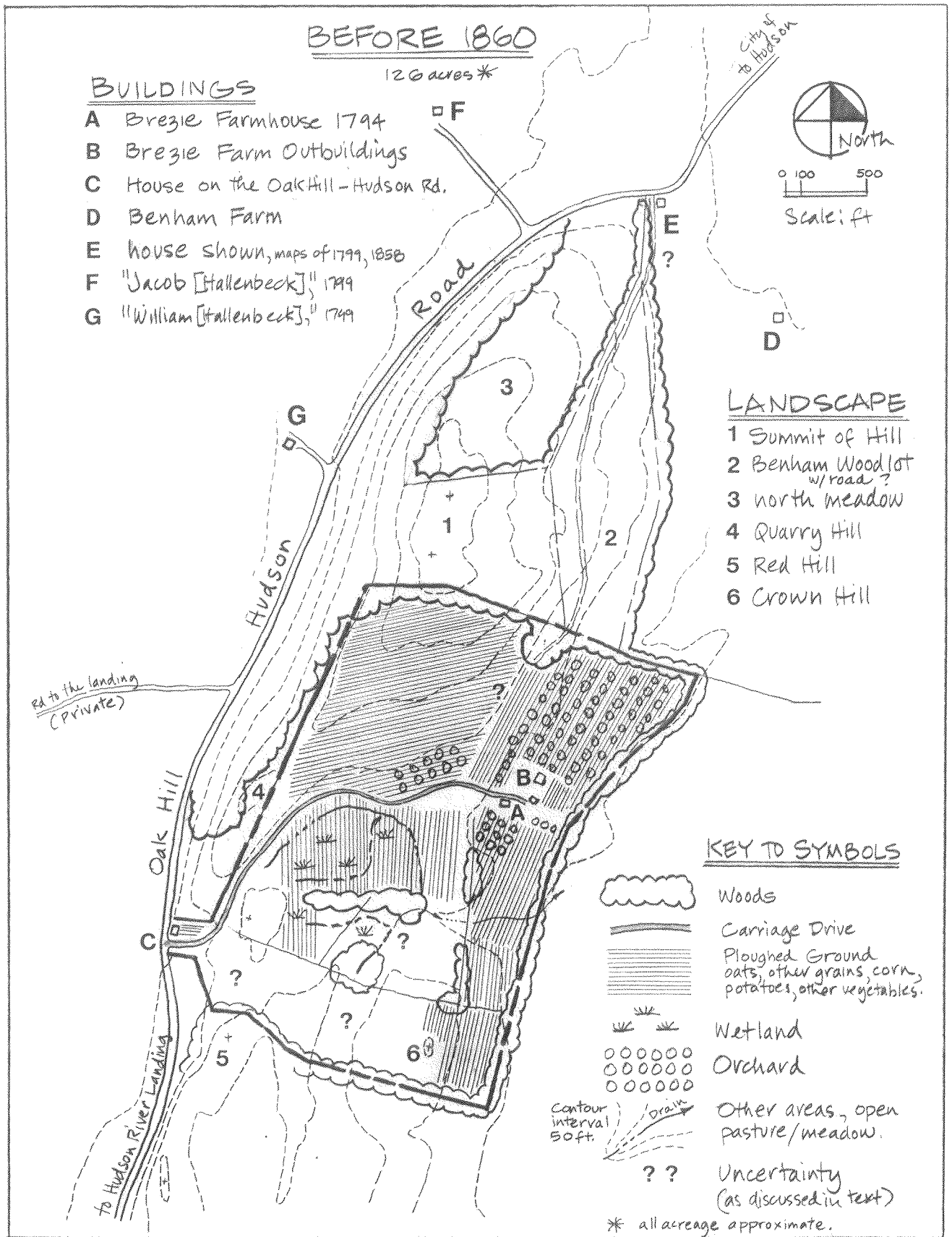


Figure 76 - Map Showing Land Acquisition and Site Development - Before 1860.

The Brezie farm had operated for at least 65 years before Church purchased it in 1860. Census data from 1855 show that Levi Simmons (who sold the property to Church) typically ploughed more than half the acreage, mostly for grain production. Wetland near the center of the site was probably drained for crop cultivation. There was access to the Oak Hill-Hudson Road and a small house there seems to have been rented or used by Church's employees. [RMT, 1996].

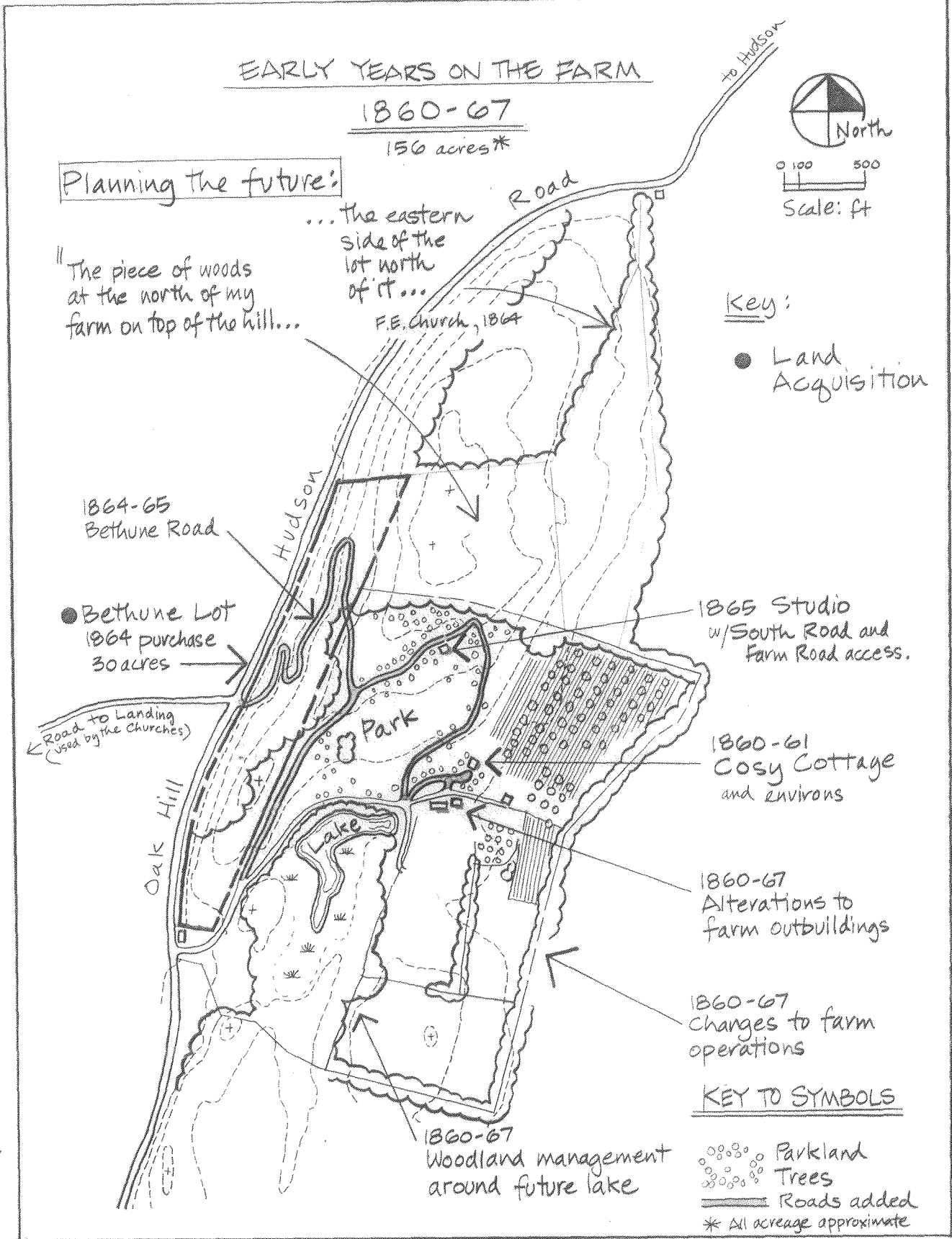


Figure 77 - Map Showing Land Acquisition and Site Development - 1860-1867.
 In the Churches' first years on the property two extensive landscape projects were started. First was the planting of hundreds of trees in the park, where grazing was restricted; second major project was the excavation of the Lake. Farm activities were altered to reflect Church's interests. There was considerably less ploughed ground than during Levi Simmons' ownership. The Bethune lot was purchased in 1864 and the dramatic Bethune Road was built to the intersection of a private road leading to the landing. The Studio was built and roads laid out in the park. The area around the Lake was apparently reserved as woodland, with any previous agricultural use in that area abandoned. Note Church's plans for the future north of the farm, quoted from a letter to his father in 1864. [RMT, 1996].

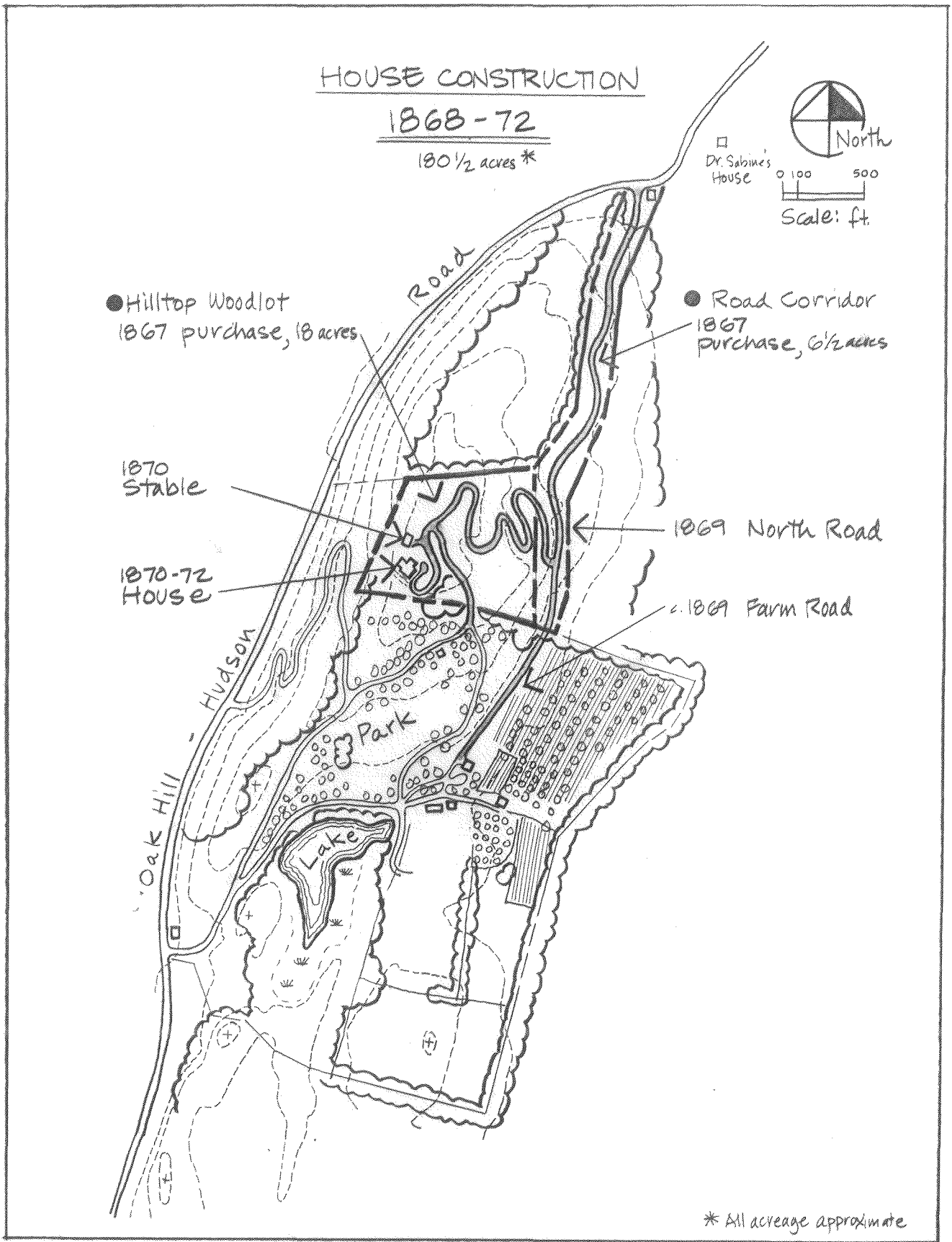


Figure 78 - Map Showing Land Acquisition and Site Development - 1868-1872.

In this period, Church realized his ambition to erect a substantial house in the woodlot at the top of hill. At the same time, Church purchased a long corridor of land that allowed the North Road to be constructed. This would be Olana's primary entrance drive. The park and Lake continued to be developed. Major alterations to the farm were completed. [RMT, 1996].

COMPLETING THE LANDSCAPE

1873-1899

241 acres*

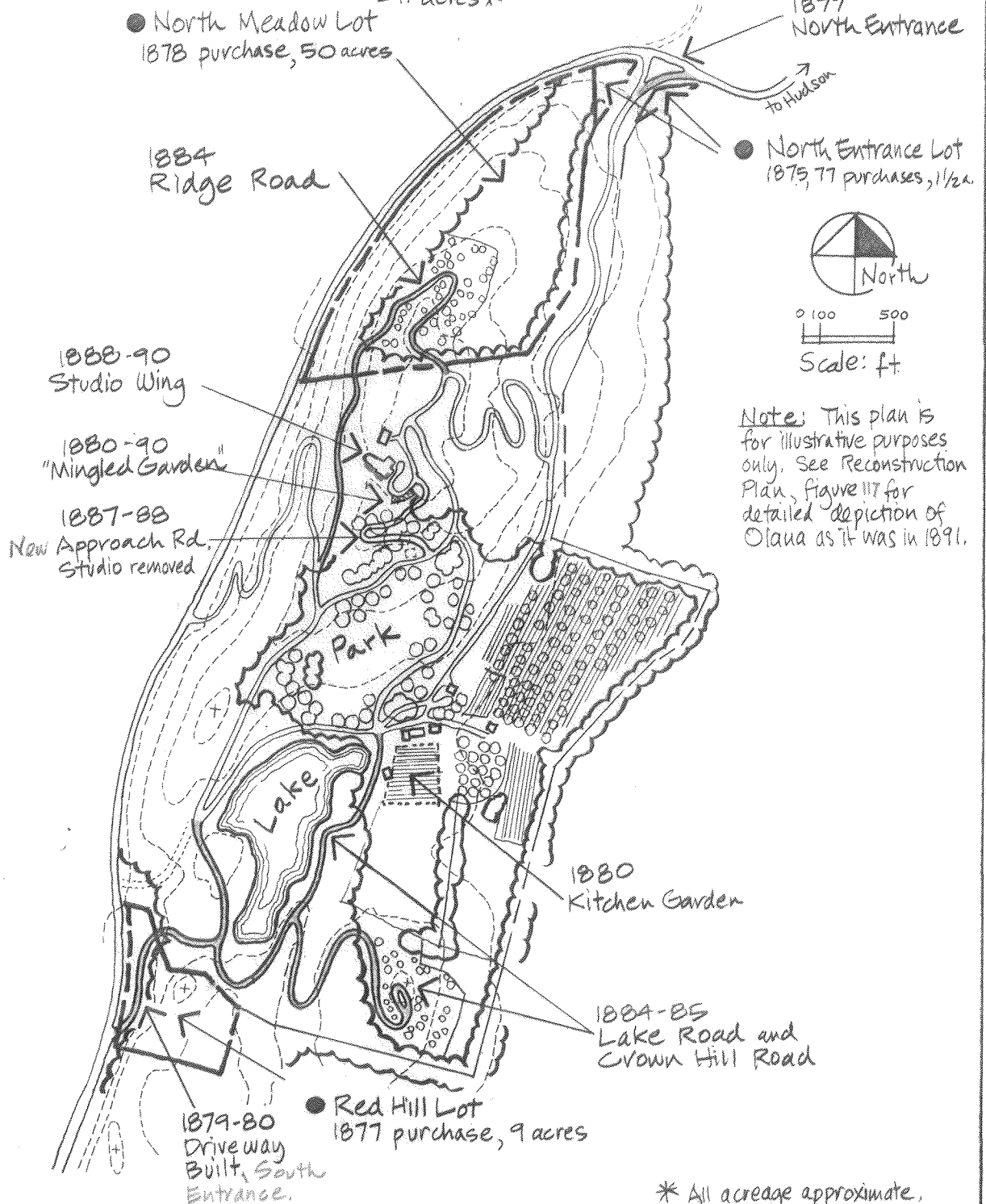


Figure 79 - Map Showing Land Acquisition and Site Development - 1873-1891.

In the twenty years after the house was built, Church completed Olana as a unified landscape. In 1877, the North Entrance was improved. The Lake was finished in 1879. After purchasing a 9-acre lot at the southwest corner, a new South Entrance was laid out with the drive brought to the lake edge. Church also purchased the 50-acre lot that was the north side of the hill, the so-called north meadow, where he built an ornamental drive, the Ridge Road, in 1884. The next year Church built a similar road to the top of Crown Hill. Finally in 1888-90, Church constructed a studio wing on the House and in the same period laid out the New Approach Road, ascending through the park and close-by the so-called "mingled garden." By 1891, the primary components of the Olana landscape had been completed. [RMT, 1996].

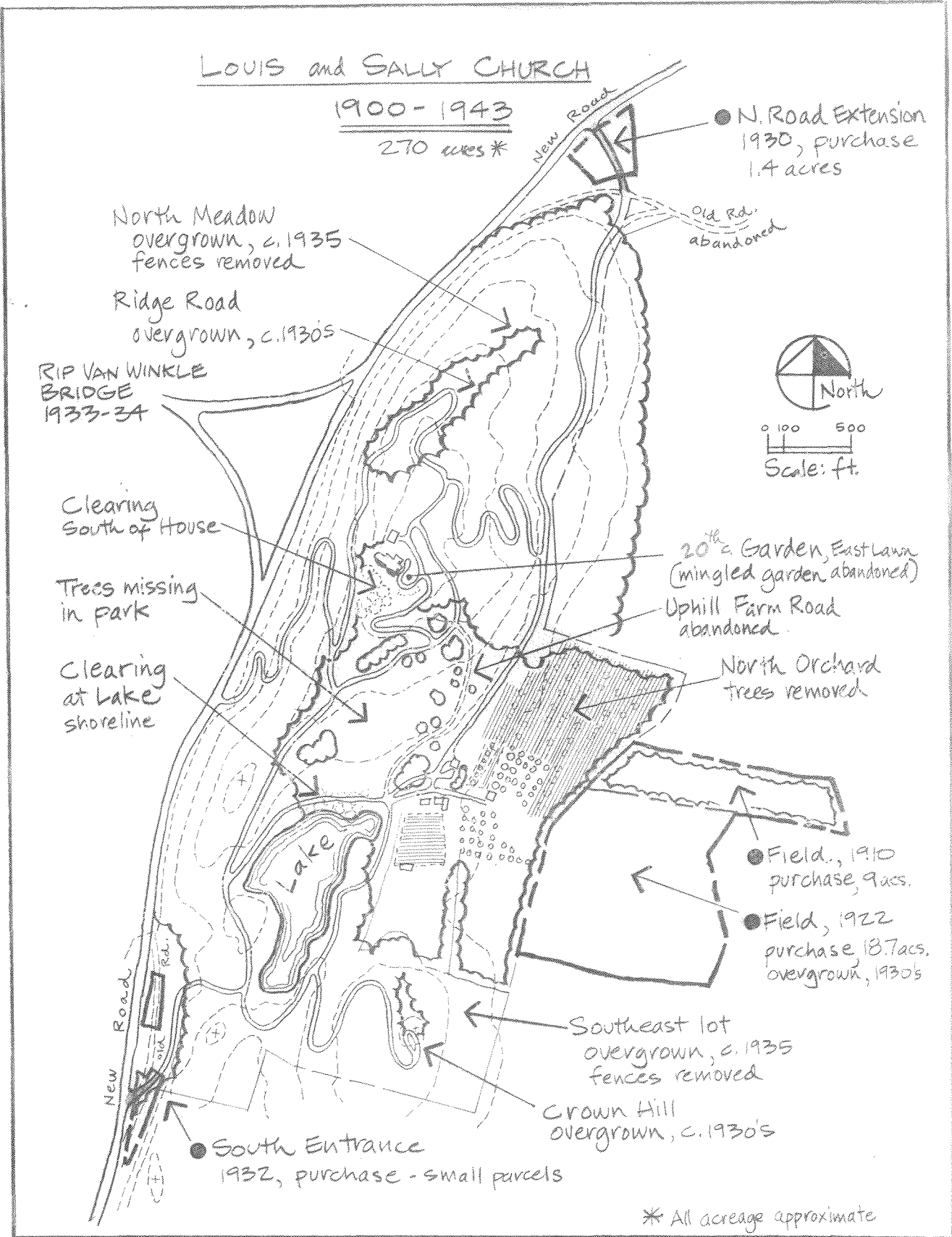


Figure 80 - Map Showing Land Acquisition and Site Development - 1901-1943

After 1900, the agricultural acreage was reduced even while Louis and Sally Church purchased about 28 acres of additional land east of the property. These activities were offset by the abandonment of the north meadow (although views from the Ridge Road seem to have been maintained). The southern portion of the farm also reverted to second-growth in this period. In turn, many trees were cleared from the park (perhaps after a storm) and along the north side of the Lake (to open the view from the House). The old apple trees in the north orchard were removed. Slowly, Olana was changing to a non-agricultural landscape. An aerial photograph, dated 1942, shows the property at the end of this period (fig. 68). [RMT, 1996].

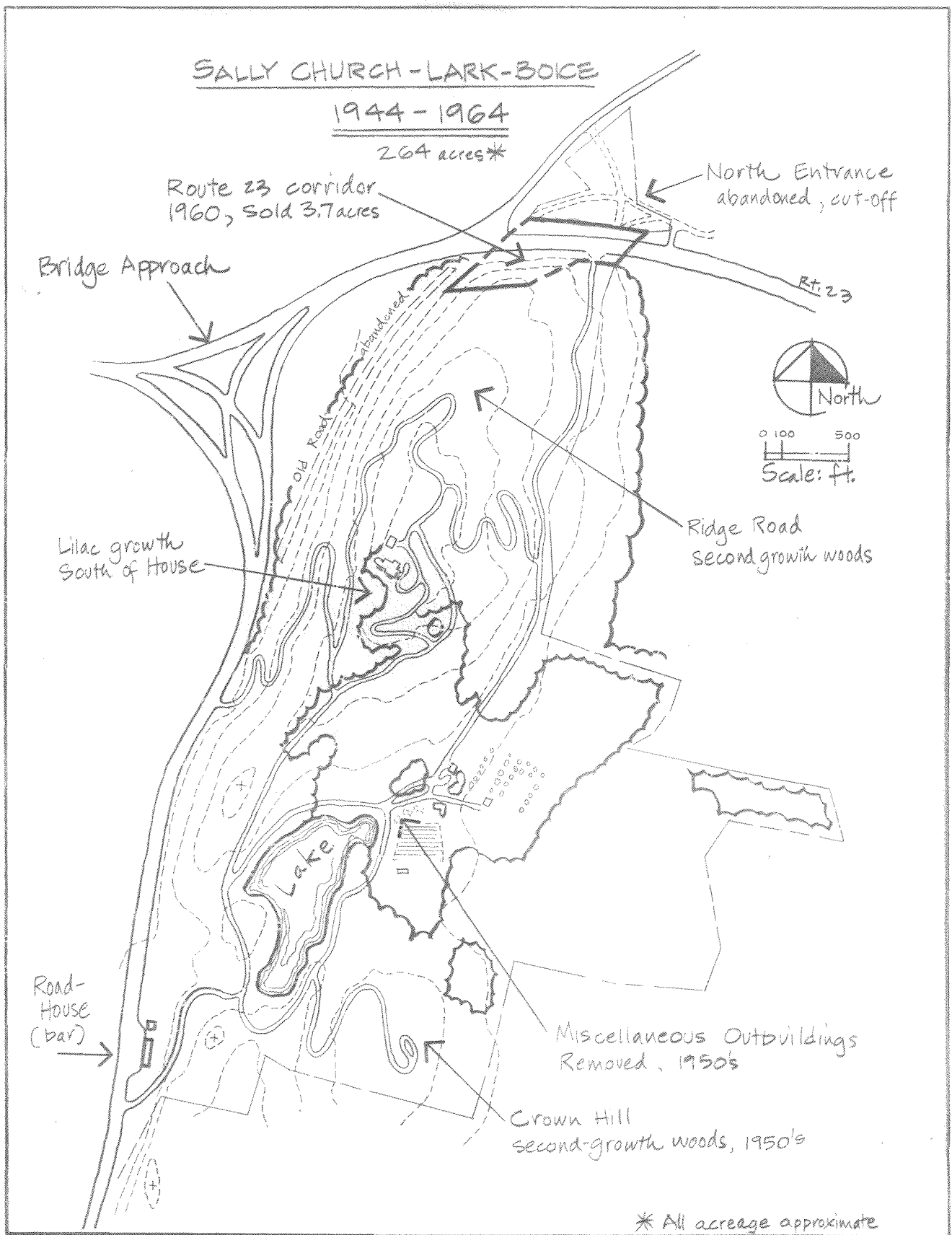


Figure 81 - Map Showing Land Acquisition and Site Development - 1944-1964

After Louis Church's death, Olana's last salaried farmer was terminated. During Sally Church's residency a tenant continued to work the land, but more sporadically as time went on. Lloyd J. Boice, the site superintendent, dismantled several of the farm outbuildings, which were disused and in need of repair. Additional acreage reverted to second-growth. There were few other notable changes until 1960 when the entire northern end of Olana was severed by the realignment of Rt. 23, with the North Entrance abandoned at that time. [RMT, 1996].

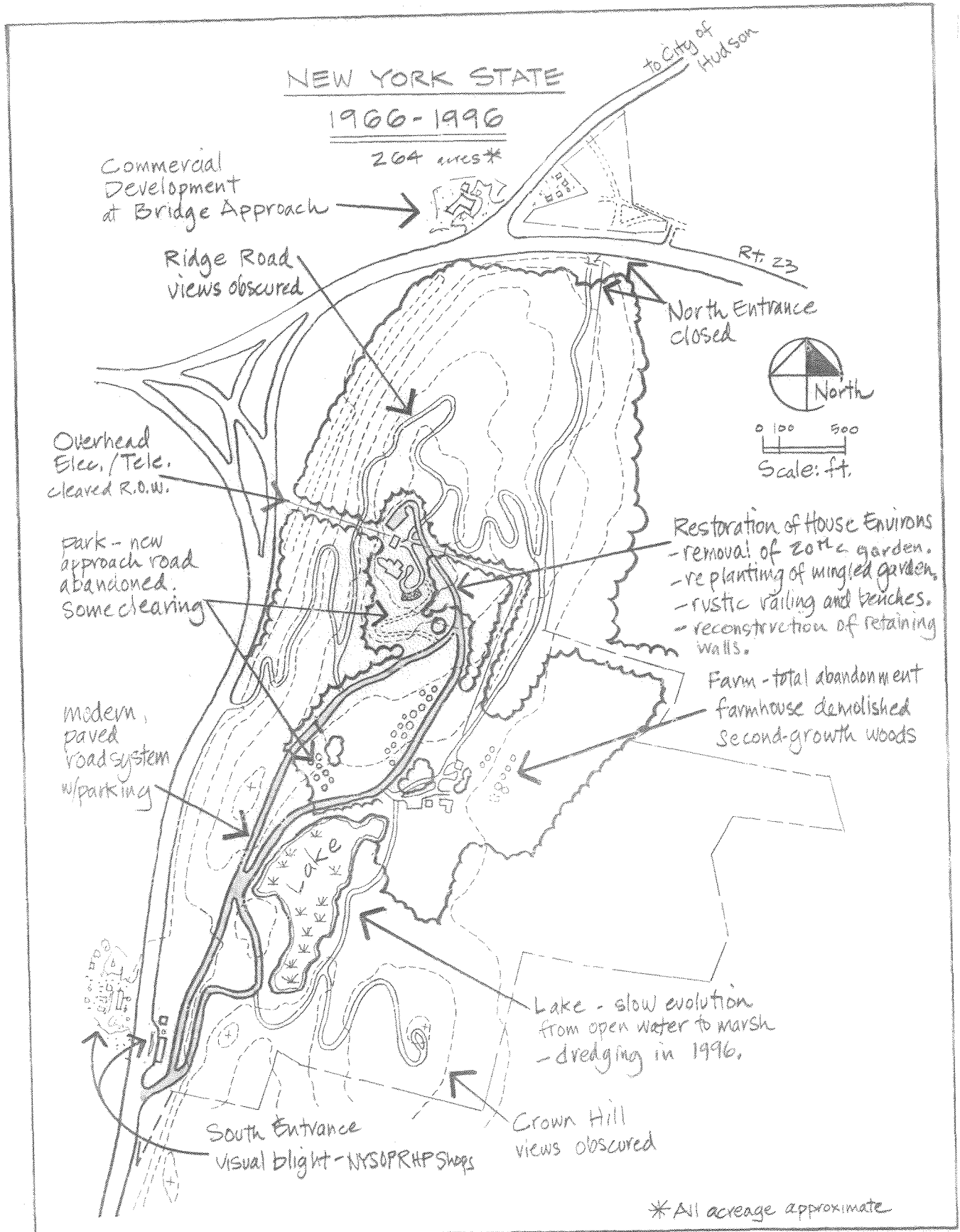
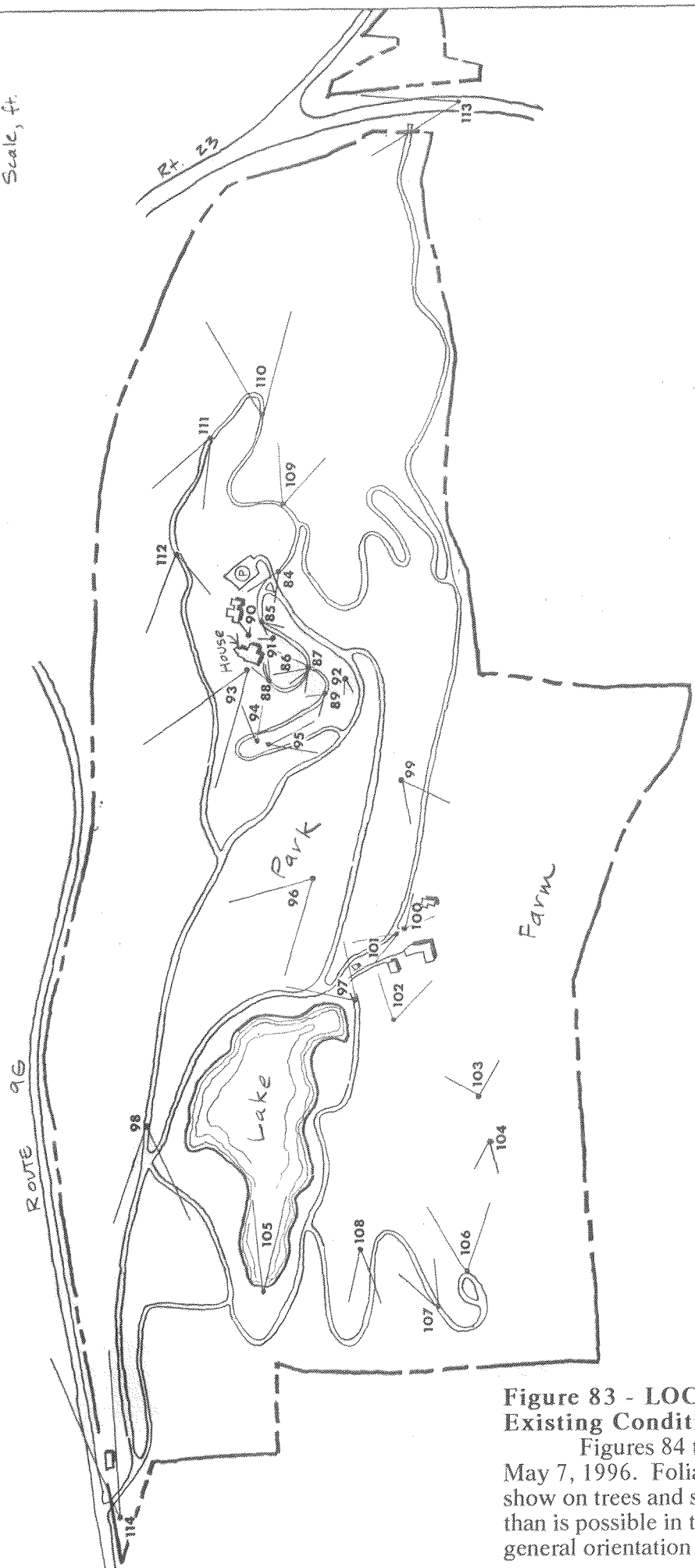
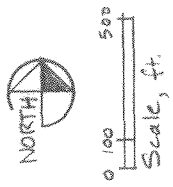


Figure 82 - Map Showing Land Acquisition and Site Development - 1965-1996

The State's purchase in 1966 altered Olana's purpose from a residential estate to museum property. In order to accommodate visitors, an elaborate paved road system and parking lot were built, together with walks that took visitors from their cars to the front door of the House. All this significantly altered the historic layout and visual experience of the landscape. The site has deteriorated under State auspices. Dilapidated, the old farmhouse was razed. Staff and funding cuts in the 1980s and 90s have led to the virtual abandonment of the landscape outside the immediate House grounds. Views have become screened by rampant vegetation. [RMT, 1996].



**Figure 83 - LOCATION PLAN:
Existing Conditions Photographs**

Figures 84 through 114 were taken on May 7, 1996. Foliage was just beginning to show on trees and shrubs allowing clearer views than is possible in the summer. Viewpoints and general orientation are shown on this plan.



Figure 84 - Photograph of North Road approach from the north, 1996.

After entering on the North Road (foreground), this is the prospect approaching the House from the north, with the original South Road entering from the left (the car is on the original South Road alignment). After joining, the North Road and original South Road form the final approach drive (fig. 85). Today, the modern paved road in the foreground cuts across the historic intersection as it leads uphill (to the right) toward the parking lot. The House, Stable and service areas are ahead, screened from view when the foliage is in season. [RMT].



**Figure 85 - Photograph of final approach drive with rustic seats
from the west, 1996.**

After the original South Road and North Road combine, to the left of this view, the final approach drive turns away from the House toward the east (view shown here), where it joins the New Approach Road -- the South Road after 1889 -- before coming to the House. Today, this is the departure point for tours. Participants gather on rustic seats modeled after a design drawn by Frederic Church in 1889. Note the conspicuous fire hydrant ahead on the right. [RMT].



Figure 86 - Photograph of House from the east, 1996.

This is the so-called “first view” of the House seen across the East Lawn at a point where the New Approach Road intersects the final approach drive (compare with figure 27). The East Lawn provides a tranquil foreground for the assertive mass of the architecture, set on a low grass terrace flanking the entrance porch and front door. The House is framed within mature trees. Today, after removal of a modern garden on the East Lawn, this scene is very close to that intended by Frederic Church. Newly planted trees, as in the foreground, instill a sense of ongoing renewal. [RMT].



Figure 87 - Photograph of final approach drive from the northeast, 1996.

Turning toward the House (a 90° left from the above, figure 86), the final approach drive continues with an orientation to the south. Distant views are screened by the larger trees ahead. On the right, shrubbery has intruded into the carriage way, narrowing the drive and causing an awkward diversion in its curving alignment. [RMT].



Figure 88 - Photograph of House from the southeast, 1996.

Framed by mature trees, this is the culminating view coming to the House, seen in an attractive oblique prospect (compare with fig. 28). The entrance door is ahead with the lawn terraces and the south front to the left. Visitors, as here, gravitate to the lawn terraces where the south panorama is experienced (see fig. 93). The white plastic chain is used to control foot traffic which can create excessive wear on the turf surface of the lawn terraces. Note the lack of vines, removed by the State to protect the masonry. [RMT].



Figure 89 - Photograph of New Approach Road and mingled garden from the north, 1996.

The final approach drive to the House was reached from the south by this route - the New Approach Road constructed by about 1889 -- Today, it is a faint turf track (compare with figure 32). The mingled garden, behind the wood posts on the right, was a feature approaching the House (coming toward the camera). Photographed here in spring, this garden will be a blowsy profusion of blooms during the summer. [RMT].



Figure 90 - Photograph of Stable and Stable yard from the south, 1996.

The Stable, today the Visitors Center (left), and the attached coachmen's dwelling to the north (ahead), define the Stable yard. This utilitarian space remains generally as Frederic Church left it (compare with figure 29), although the extent of the brick surface seen here is from later additions added during Louis Church's ownership and by New York State. While many trees have been removed since 1900, new plantings (on the right) will help to screen the service area as intended by Church. In foliage season the parking lot, visible in the background at the top of the hill, is screened. [RMT].



Figure 91 - Photograph of fern garden and rustic railing at turn-around from the north, 1996.

This view is a near duplicate of the historic appearance (compare with figure 30). The rustic railing was reconstructed in 1992. Ferns, just emerging in this early spring photograph, still dominate the plantings which includes mingled shrubs and perennials as in Frederic Church's lifetime. The most notable change is the stone wall, today a concrete and veneer stone reconstruction (installed by New York State) replacing the original dry-laid masonry. [RMT].



Figure 92 - Photograph of water pump (site of Greenhouse) from the west, 1996.
This pump is all that remains visible from the Greenhouse development located in this sheltered spot. Here it was screened from the New Approach Road, utilized in the period when the Greenhouse was built. [RMT].



Figure 93 - Photograph of panorama from the lawn terraces looking southwest, 1996.

The panorama is centered on Inbocht Bay, a wide section of the Hudson River that creates a clear focus for the eye. The Catskill mountains to the west (right) balance and frame the view which is balanced and given interest by the park and Lake (left). A portion of the New Approach Road is seen in the meadow directly below the lawn terraces. Recent clearing of about 60 spindly maples along the immediate wooded edge has restored the long view to its earlier character. Views to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge (out of view to the right) have been screened by preserving taller trees in that direction. View management requires selected clearing to allow the optimum composition - a process akin to Frederic Church's landscape paintings. [RMT].



Figure 94 - Photograph of House from the south, 1996.

This view is experienced from the New Approach Road (foreground) as it winds its way through the park below the House. Today, the barren slope is devoid of the evergreen and deciduous trees that once covered this area (compare with figure 24). Note the informal footpath being formed by visitors on the slope to the right of the House. [RMT].



Figure 95 - Photograph of South Road from the west, 1996.

This view shows the New Approach Road, today a turfed path, beside a portion of the modern paved exit road. These routes were once part of a single carriage drive -- the South Road -- leading to the House from the south. The former dominance of white birch trees (compare with fig. 33) is much reduced today with only a few birch still present. [RMT].



Figure 96 - Photograph of park and Lake from the northeast, 1996.

This view can be studied along side earlier images (compare with figure 35). The Lake is seen below (south). The distant Catskills are visible on the right (west). Quarry Hill, once a prominent foreground feature (see figures 15 and 16), is today an inconspicuous high point masked by a canopy of second growth trees (left of distant Catskills). In the open park, few specimen trees remain. [RMT].



Figure 97 - Photograph of five-point intersection from the southeast, 1996.

In Church's period, this scene was a meeting of several carriage roads (see: 1886 Plan, fig. 22a). The lower Farm Road entered from the west (left) crossing in front of the large maple tree seen here (in front of the automobile parked on today's modern paved entrance road). The lower Farm Road then continued to the Barn, downhill to the east (right). Other roads coming together at this point include the driveway to Cosy Cottage, seen aligned beside the large maple tree on the right of the photograph, with a sawhorse blocking the way. An uphill Farm Road led toward the hilltop about as the modern entrance road goes today (upper right). The Lake road enters from the camera's viewpoint.

Today, this intricate arrangement of carriage lanes is cluttered with sawhorses, signs and a jumble of realigned and unrelated surfaces, including crushed stone on the left which has been spread to give access to the shore of the Lake. [RMT].



Figure 98 - Photograph of South Road and modern exit road from the north, 1996.

Standing on the South Road, the view shows the exiting orientation where a modern exit road (leading straight downhill to the right) is used instead of staying on the historic alignment (ahead to the left). Today, that route is used for entering traffic only. But from this point, access is detoured onto the lower Farm Road (off to the lower left) instead of coming straight to the camera and up the historic route. At this intersection, the historic South Road has been modified in fundamental ways. [RMT].



Figure 99 - Photograph of farm from the northwest, 1996.

This view looks over the site of the cottage garden, the Brezie farmhouse (now a ruin located just to the right of the lone pine tree in the middle distance), and the adjacent farmhouse lot (compare with figure 36). Today, little remains of the once extensive fruit trees. Note, Blue Hill in the distance, a prominent landmark in Church's time, today a vulnerable part of Olana's eastern viewshed. In the foreground, modern overhead wires bring electric service to the farm area. The shed north of Cosy Cottage is visible on the right. [RMT].



Figure 100 - Photograph of Cosy Cottage from the southwest, 1996.

Cosy Cottage is severely deteriorated and has lost both its residential appearance and several of its elements (compare with figs. 38 and 57). The foreground pine tree remains from the earlier plantings. The roof is temporarily covered with a tarpaulin. Scaffolding is in place in preparation for installing a new roof which was installed in the autumn of 1996. [RMT].



Figure 101 - Photograph of driveway to Cosy Cottage from the east, 1996.

Several old maples remain from the historic situation when this approach drive was planted with an arrangement of flanking trees (compare with figure 40). The driveway led to the five-point intersection, ahead. The pump house is seen in the distance behind a picnic grove that has been set up with tables south of the driveway. The lower Farm Road is seen behind the grove. [RMT].



Figure 102 - Photograph of Barn, farm Stable and site of Kitchen Garden from the south, 1996.

The abandoned character of this scene is apparent (compare with figure 44). The 1899 dairy Barn and older attached smaller Barn (on the west) are in relatively good condition. The farm Stable is all that remains of an earlier cluster of attached structures that included the wagon house and lean-to sheds. Also missing today is a small building that occupied the south side of the Barnyard, thought to have been a Coachman's House and perhaps later a garden / tool shed. The Kitchen Garden Church installed in 1880 and irrigated from the Lake (off to the west, left in this view), is today the field in the foreground. [RMT].



Figure 103 - Photograph of hedgerow (between east and west fields) from the southeast, 1996.

This is an old hedgerow delineated by a remnant stone wall. Mature oak, black locust and apple trees attest to its antiquity. In Church's lifetime, it separated the east and west fields that lay south of the Barn (see: 1886 Plan, fig. 22b). Today, the area is embowered in second-growth vegetation that is killing-off the lower limbs of the larger specimen trees. [RMT].



Figure 104 - Photograph of post with old barbed wire in southeast corner lot, 1996.

This old cedar post is all that can be found of a fence line installed by Frederic Church after his construction of the Crown Hill Road in 1885. The barbed wire is of a type that was manufactured briefly during this period. After Church's death, the fence was dismantled. Here a roll of wire was left beside the post, abandoned early in the 20th-century and left undisturbed it is now lost in the second-growth woods that have grown up in the past 50 years. [RMT].



Figure 105 - Photograph of Lake, park and House from the south, 1996.

The spring photograph was taken before the emergence of rampant vegetation that by summer would have obliterated the open water. While a variety of factors are at work, the Lake has been slowly filling up with muck and its water depth has been reduced to inches in some areas. After this photograph was taken New York State began an extensive dredging operations that will -- in two seasons -- excavate a quantity of muck that Frederic Church needed two decades to accomplish. Note, the park to the north (compare with fig. 34). [RMT].



Figure 106 - Photograph of the view from Crown Hill looking north, 1996.

Taken from the turn-around at the top of Crown Hill, this view shows The House, barely visible through a narrow viewway cleared in the 1970s. But the historic panorama from this setting (compare with figure 45) has been lost to unchecked second-growth in the foreground, a situation that extends to the east (out of view to the right). The picnic table suggests contemporary use, but in fact the spot is seldom visited today due to its loss of amenity and distance from the House. [RMT].



Figure 107 - Photograph of Crown Hill Road from the south, 1996.

This view shows Crown Hill Road as it descends from the summit. In Church's lifetime, there was a view ahead (compare with fig. 46). Note the few older trees and extensive second-growth of weed trees ahead. The road is now a walking trail. [RMT].



Figure 108 - Photograph of specimen tree along the Crown Hill Road, 1996.

As is the case elsewhere on the property, mature trees that were once featured in open areas -- as with this old oak tree along the Crown Hill Road -- are today struggling in second-growth woods. In foliage season, this photograph would be a blur of vegetation and the resulting deep shade is killing off the lower limbs of these trees which were intended as specimens. [RMT].



Figure 109 - Photograph of the view from Ridge Road looking north, 1996.

The view looks out over the formerly open north meadow (compare with figure 48) Today this is dense woodland. Note the larger tree in the right, middle ground. This is the same specimen seen in earlier images. [RMT].



Figure 110 - Photograph of the view from Ridge Road looking northwest, 1996.

This is the northern limit of the Ridge Road (compare with figure 49). The road turns from here abruptly west and then south (to the left in the photograph). Today, only a diminutive clearing remains and all views are screened even outside foliage season. Note the single older tree near the road edge on the right. [RMT].



Figure 111 - Photograph of the view from Ridge Road looking south, 1996.

This view shows the west side of the Ridge Road bordered by an irregular arrangement of old pine trees, whose black trunks are clearly visible. These pines may have been present as small trees in the last decade of Church's lifetime. As such, they may have been used to compose and orient the views outward. Today, the tall pole-like trunks are set in second-growth that obscures all outward views even outside foliage season. [RMT].



Figure 112 - Photograph of the view from Ridge Road entering woods looking southwest, 1996.

Here, the open Ridge Road approaches an old woodland edge that existed prior to Church's development (compare with figures 51 and 52). Even here, where views were preserved by the sharp descent of the topography, second-growth has encroached to the point where foliage screens all outward prospects. [RMT].



Figure 113 - Photograph of modern Route 23 as it crosses Olana, looking west, 1996.

This section of modern, divided highway was constructed in 1960 as part of highway improvements leading to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, ahead. The severed North Road can be seen gated, beside the sign on the extreme left, with the older trees behind once part of the wooded North Road corridor. The North Entrance is out of view to the right. Today, it is an isolated remnant parcel (see fig. 75). [RMT].



Figure 114 - Photograph of South Entrance from the south, 1996.

Olana's present entrance, the historic South Entrance, is in the foreground, with Route 9G ahead. The building just ahead was a restaurant before its purchase by New York State in 1968. It is now the Taconic State Park Region's restoration shop. Across Rt. 9G in the distance is a Taconic Region maintenance depot, a former fruit stand, located on a neighboring property also purchased in 1968. These developments do not enhance amenity at Olana's modern entrance. [RMT].

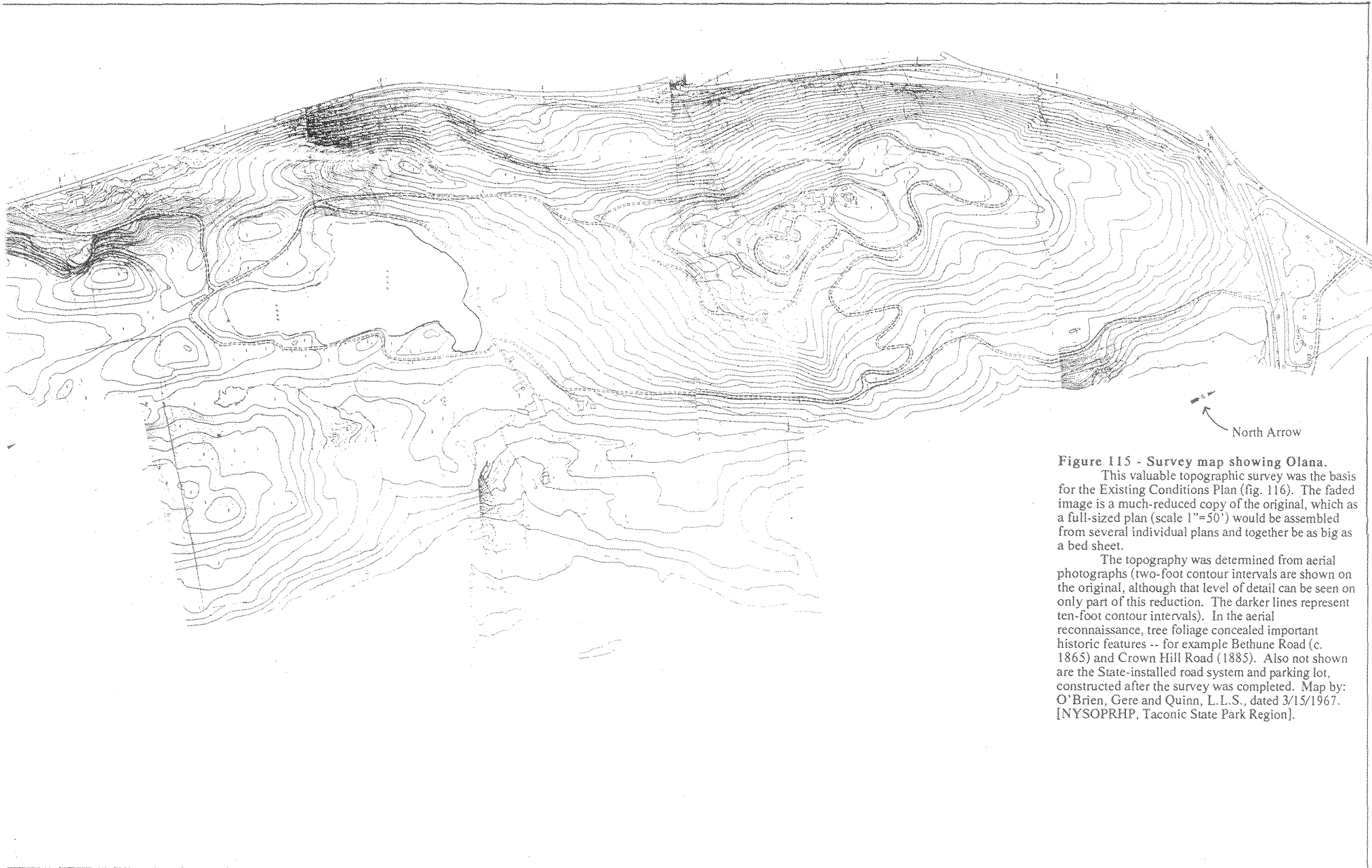
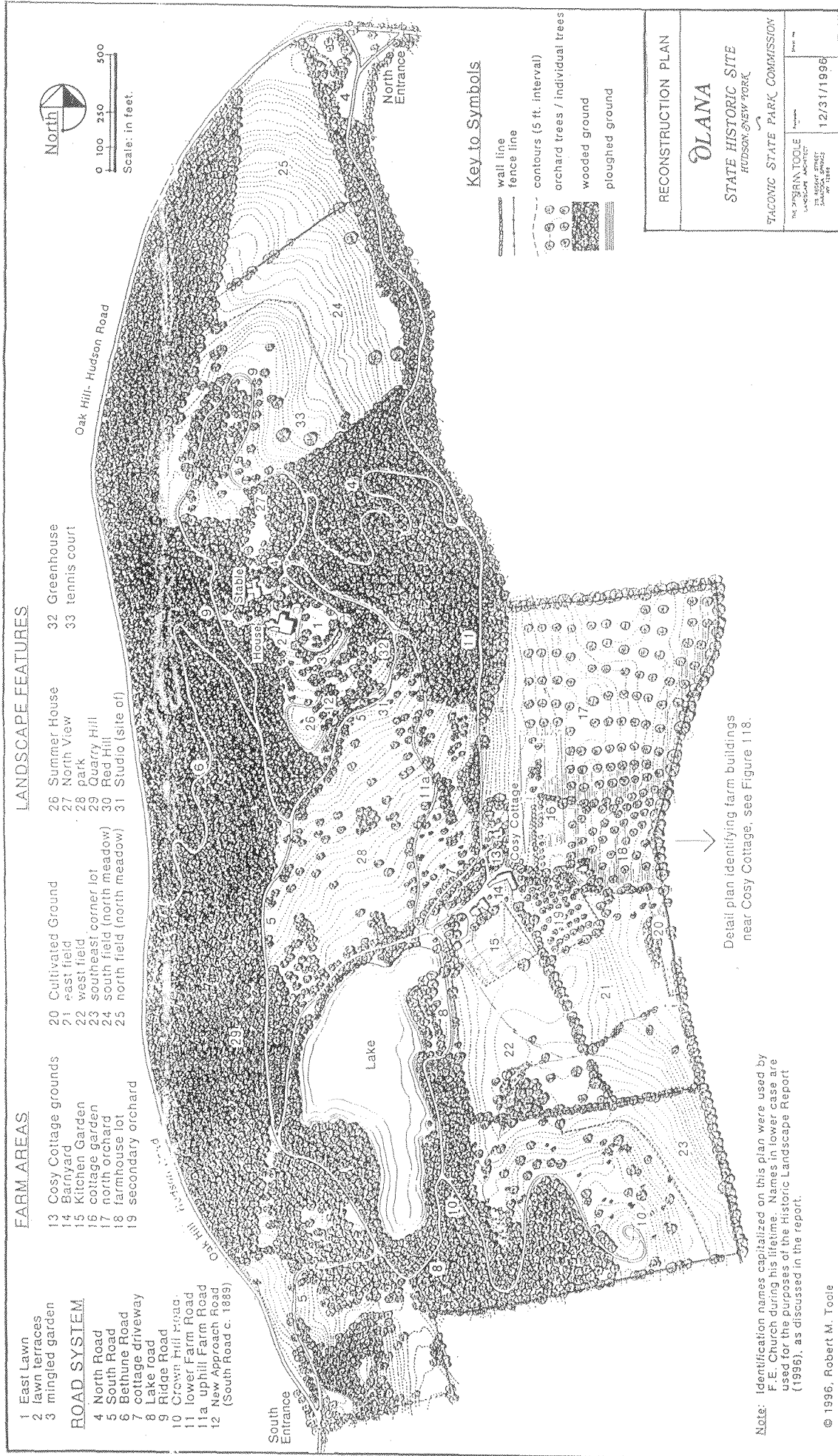


Figure 115 - Survey map showing Olana.

This valuable topographic survey was the basis for the Existing Conditions Plan (fig. 116). The faded image is a much-reduced copy of the original, which as a full-sized plan (scale 1"=50') would be assembled from several individual plans and together be as big as a bed sheet.

The topography was determined from aerial photographs (two-foot contour intervals are shown on the original, although that level of detail can be seen on only part of this reduction. The darker lines represent ten-foot contour intervals). In the aerial reconnaissance, tree foliage concealed important historic features -- for example Bethune Road (c. 1865) and Crown Hill Road (1885). Also not shown are the State-installed road system and parking lot, constructed after the survey was completed. Map by: O'Brien, Gere and Quinn, L.L.S., dated 3/15/1967. [NYSOPRHP, Taconic State Park Region].

Fig. 117 - Reconstruction Plan, (1890-1900.



Note: Identification names capitalized on this plan were used by F. E. Church during his lifetime. Names in lower case are used for the purposes of the Historic Landscape Report (1996), as discussed in the report.

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Figure 117 - Reconstruction Plan (1890-1900)
This plan can be compared with the Existing Conditions Plan to illustrate changes in the landscape since 1900 [RMT].

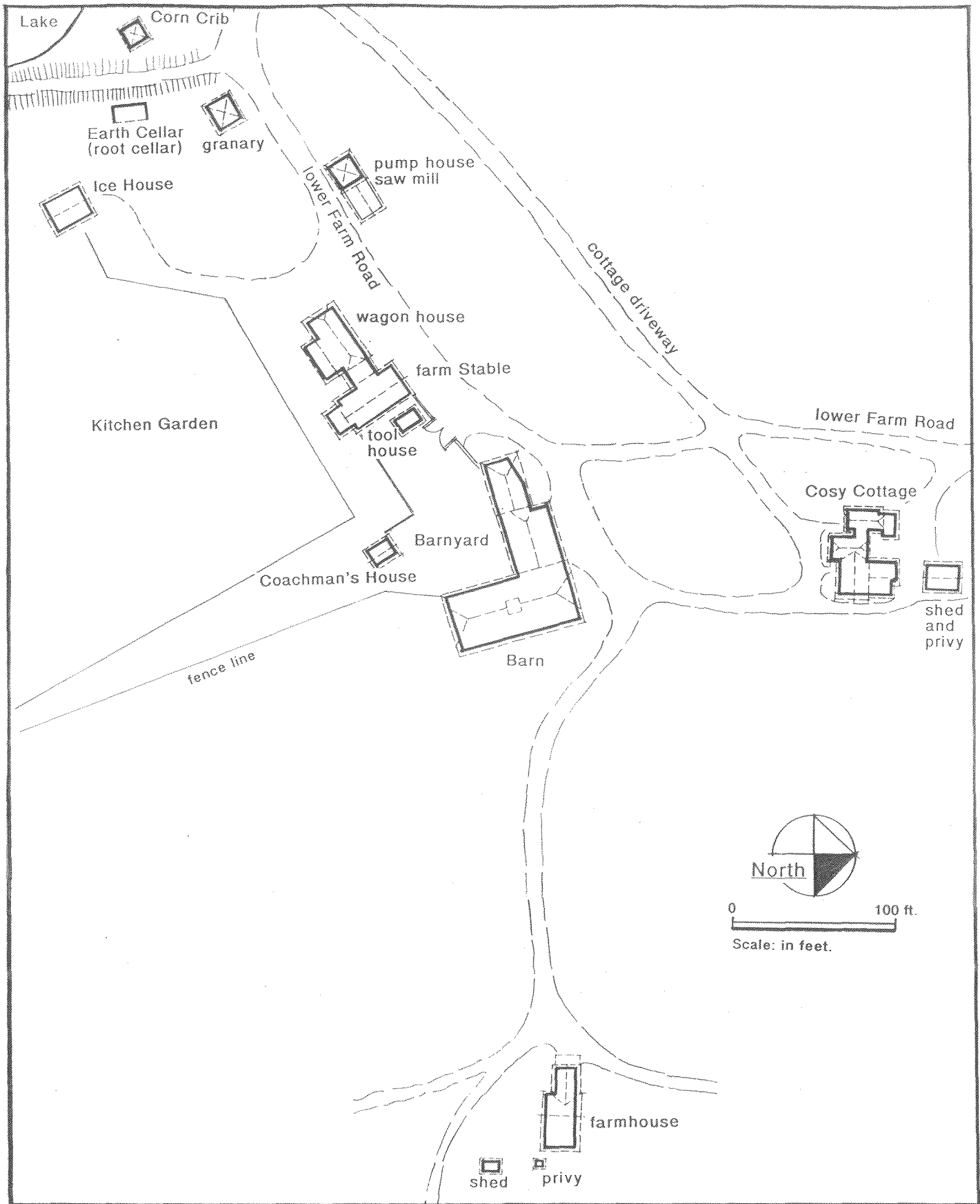


Figure 118 - Reconstruction Plan (1891-1900) - Detail showing farm buildings near Cosy Cottage, 1996.

This identification plan shows the area around Cosy Cottage, highlighting the various farm buildings that existed in that area at the end of Frederic Church's lifetime [RMT].

APPENDIX A - SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY and REPOSITORIES CONSULTED

Olana is a well documented historic site, although the evidence is somewhat fragmented and is not fully comprehensive. The research process for this report began with a thorough review of the extensive collection of documentation in the David Huntington Archive at the Olana State Historic Site [DHA], by far the richest source of primary information on Frederic E. Church's property. The archive includes extensive written records, plans, photographs, sketches and paintings, maps and other illustrations. In addition, administrative files at the Olana State Historic Site [OSHS] include both original material and copies of important documentation -- some of this material duplicates important information from other repositories. The collections at Olana are augmented by the collections in local historical societies, notably the Columbia County Historical Society [CCHS] and the Greene County Historical Society, Vedder Memorial Library [VML]. There are also pertinent files at New York State Bureau of Historic Sites at Peebles Island [BHS], and to a limited extent in files at Taconic Park Region offices in Staatsburg, NY.

The Olana archive has been the source of considerable earlier research regarding the landscape and these efforts are listed comprehensively below.

The documentation most pertinent to the historical context in which Olana developed is detailed in the footnotes accompanying the narrative in Section I. These sources reflect the particular history of landscape gardening in the Romantic period in the Hudson River Valley, and more broadly in its English background.

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APPENDIX B - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

NOTE: Capitalized names are documented as used in Frederic Church's lifetime. Lower case names are used for the purposes of this report.

Barn - A "L"-shaped, composite structure built over four decades. The largest component was built for dairy use in 1899 (about 75 ft. x 35 ft.). It was attached to an older barn (about 40 ft. x 28 ft.).

Barnyard - Enclosed area (about .6 acre) south of the barn complex. Label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

Bethune Road - Carriage drive (about 1/2 mile in length) developed to provide access from the Oak Hill-Hudson Road up the steep western escarpment. Label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

Brezie farm - About 126 acres, established in 1794 by Wynsant Brezie. Traditional name for the farm parcel Church purchased in 1860.

carriage turn-around - Located just north of the House. After stopping at the House carriages could turn around in this circle. Formed by circular stone retaining wall topped with rustic railing.

cistern(s) - Water storage basin(s) at the top of the hill and in the Stable area.

Coachman's House - Small dwelling, built in 1869 intended as staff housing for the coachman. Perhaps later adapted as a garden shed or tool house and moved or dismantled after 1906.

coachman's dwelling - Staff housing attached to the Stable, north of the House, built pre-1886.

Corn Crib - Located close to the Lake and mentioned in several correspondence. Shown on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

Cosy Cottage - Church family residence at the farm for over ten years (1861-1872) before moving to the main House. Built 1860-61, with west wing added in 1869. Used primarily as staff housing after 1872.

cottage driveway (driveway to Cosy Cottage) - Short section of road (about 500 ft.) leading from the five-point intersection to Cosy Cottage, presumably built in about 1861.

cottage garden - Fenced agricultural area (about 2.9 acres) located east of Cosy Cottage. Used as a kitchen garden before 1880 (?), and/or for specialized fruit cultivation, bush fruits, strawberries and other crops. Shown on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

cottage grounds - Immediate area around Cosy Cottage (about .8 acre). Small park south of the cottage, plus service yard on the north side.

Crown Hill - Located at the southeast corner of Olana (elev. about 350 ft.). Summit was terminus of the Crown Hill Road, with outlook to north and east. Label on the 1886 Plan.

Crown Hill Road - Ornamental carriage drive linking the Lake road with the summit of Crown Hill. (about 2/5 mile in length), built by Church in 1885.

Cultivated Ground - Agricultural area (about .7 acre) located along eastern side of the farm. Label on 1886 Plan of Olana, shown with tan color, confirming that the area was ploughed.

Earth Cellar (root cellar) - Church described re-roofing this in 1869. An essential farm outbuilding built into the eastern side of the Lake dam.

east field - Agricultural area (about .6 acre) located southeast of the barn complex, fenced and apparently used as a pasture late in Church's lifetime.

East Lawn - Turf area east of the House defined by the circular final approach drive.

entrance porch - Raised stone platform at the House entrance, east facade.

farmhouse - Original Brezie farmhouse, built 1794, with west and east additions during Church's ownership. Located east of Cosy Cottage, it was occasionally used by guests, but typically served as the farmer's residence in Church's lifetime.

farmhouse lot - Agricultural field (about 3.7 acres) that was an orchard late in Church's lifetime, earlier possible site of a barn and kitchen garden close to the 1794 farmhouse.

farm Stable - Located west of the Barn, housing horses, etc. Date of construction is unknown. Labeled "Barn" on the 1886 Plan of Olana. Later photographs show a rectangular building (about 40 ft. x 21 ft.).

fern garden - Small garden area dominated by ferns set on north side of the retaining wall that formed the carriage turn-around north of the House.

final approach drive - The short segment of drive (200 yds.) that precedes arrival at the House, formed by the merging of the North Road and New Approach Road (South Road).

five-point intersection - Intersection of several roads that occurred at the northeast corner of the Lake. Here, the lower Farm Road intersects with the uphill Farm Road, Cosy Cottage driveway and the Lake road.

granary - Small farm outbuilding (about 16 ft. sq.) located between the Lake and the wagon house used for grain storage. Unknown date of construction but shown on 1886 Plan of Olana and later photographs.

Greenhouse - Small potting shed with attached glass-roofed annex located east of the House in a low spot hidden from view and convenient to water and the House. Built in 1892.

House - Built 1870-73; Calvert Vaux, consulting architect; Frederic Church, designer.

house on the Oak Hill-Hudson Road - Purchased by Church with the original farm parcel. Thought to have been staff housing until dismantled and removed in c. 1879 after South Entrance was redesigned.

Ice House - Sizable farm building (about 26 ft. x 20 ft.) located on the east side of the Lake.

Kitchen Garden - The primary vegetable and cut flower garden (about 1.4 acres) at the end of Church's lifetime. Located east of the Lake (which provided irrigation). Labeled "Garden" on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

Lake - About 10 acres of open water with an average depth in Frederic Church's lifetime of at least 5 feet. Wetland in 1860, excavation required almost 20 years (1860-1879).

Lake road - Portion of the carriage drive that circled the Lake between the South Road and the lower Farm Road (about 1/2 mile in length).

lawn terraces - Stepped turf surfaces along the south facade of the House.

lower Farm Road - Section of the farm-access road (about 5/8 mile in length), that follows the north shore of the Lake, from the South Road to the barn complex and extending onward to the North Road.

mingled garden - Long, narrow perennial border laid out to be viewed from the New Approach Road. Established in the period 1888-1891.

New Approach Road (part of South Road after c. 1888) - Segment of carriage drive (about 1/4 mile in length), that provided access to the House from the south, linking the older alignment of the South Road with the final approach drive in a looping layout south of the House. Built in about 1888.

North Entrance - Developed after a public highway realignment in 1875. The distinctive splayed arrangement was the primary entry into the property from the north throughout Church's lifetime. Label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

north field - Agricultural field (about 8.5 acres) at the northern end of the north meadow area.

north meadow - General name for the nearly 50-acre area purchased in 1877 consisting of the northern side of the dominant hill.

north orchard - Agricultural area (about 15.5 acres) laid out with large, standard apple trees prior to Church's purchase. In keeping with the well-spaced layout of trees, the area was also ploughed and used for crop cultivation during Church's residency.

North Road - Built in 1869 in conjunction with construction of the main House to provide primary carriage drive access from the north (about 1 mile in length). Name used as a label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

North Road corridor - Wooded area that encompasses the North Road.

North View - Spot on the northern side of the hilltop where there was a panoramic view to the north, overlooking the north meadow. Label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

Oak Hill-Hudson Road - The public road (today Rt. 9G) that extended along the west side of the dominant hill. Oak Hill was (and remains) a Livingston family estate property located a mile south of Olana. The City of Hudson is three miles north.

ombra (umbra) - The covered sitting porch on the south facade of the House, opened in summer and closed as a winter when it served as a conservatory.

park - The open area (about 25 acres) extending down hill from the House to the Lake. The park was clearly defined, studded with trees, traversed by carriage drives and mowed for a hay crop. It was not grazed.

piazza (veranda) - Wood floor, covered sitting area on the south facade of the House.

pump house (with saw mill) - Small outbuilding (about 15 ft. sq.) located opposite the granary on the lower Farm Road. Housed the pump used to supply water to the House.

Quarry Hill - Prominent high point located along the ridge line south of the House (elev. about 375 ft.). Possible source of stone for the house construction. Label on 1886 Plan of Olana.

Red Hill - Prominent high point in southwest corner of the property (elev. about 359 ft.). The hillside was quarried for shale used on the carriage drives. Label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

Ridge Road - Ornamental carriage drive (about 1 mile in length), that looped out to the northern end of the hilltop and followed along the steep western escarpment offering a highly scenic drive. Built in 1884, label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

rustic railing - Distinctive twisted handrail constructed of mountain laurel branches installed along the top of the retaining wall at the carriage turn-around.

rustic bench - Distinctive seats (built of mountain laurel branches) seen in one photograph (fig. 52) and illustrated by F. E. Church.

secondary orchard - Agricultural area (about 2.3 acres) located south of the Brezie farmhouse, used as an orchard in 1886.

service area (north of House) - Area utilized for a variety of service activities outside rear door of the House.

south field - Agricultural field (about 10.8 acres) at the southern end of the the north meadow area, used for grazing and mowed for hay.

southeast corner lot - Agricultural field (about 5 acres) at the southeast corner of the property formed when the Crown Hill Road was developed in 1885. Used for grazing.

South Entrance - Built by Church in 1879 after purchase of a 9-acre parcel at the southwest corner of the property that allowed development of a new gateway onto the public highway. Label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

South Road - Route of the south approach from the South Entrance to the final approach drive at the East Lawn (included the New Approach Road after c. 1889). Label on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

Stable - Located about 100 feet north of the House. Built in 1870 with later wings and attached coachman's dwelling.

Stable yard - Open area on the east side of the Stable.

Studio - Free-standing structure (about 24 ft. sq.), built in the park in about 1864-65; dismantled in c. 1888. Shown on 1886 Plan of Olana.

studio wing - Addition at the west end of the House in 1888-90.

Summer House - Small ornamental seat/structure located on a knoll in the park south of the House. Label on 1886 Plan of Olana.

swamp - Two isolated pockets of wetland east of the Lake. Labels on the 1886 Plan of Olana.

tool house - Name given to a small shed (10 ft. x 13 ft.) located in the barn complex, between the Ban and farm Stable.

uphill Farm Road - Section of the farm access roads that linked the five-point intersection and the lower Farm Road uphill to the House (about 1/4 mile in length).

wagon house - Rectangular building (about 40 ft. x 22 ft.), attached on the western side of the Farm Stable used for vehicle storage.

west field - Agricultural field (about 6.8 acres) located south of the barn complex, used for grazing.

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