



# **The Enjoyment of Scenery**

**The Origins and History of  
the “Utica Parks and Parkway  
Historic District”**





## Some Basic Information:

- Between 1897 and 1923, the Proctor family donated approximately 600 acres of land to the people of Utica to be maintained by the City government as public parks in perpetuity.
- The Proctors invested considerable time and resources on these parks and the parkway, working closely with the leading landscape architect of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr
- Our Olmsted system is comprised of Conkling and the two Proctor Parks and the Parkway.
- Our Olmsted system covers an area equivalent approximately 70% the size of Manhattan's Central Park (which was designed by Olmsted's father) and comprises the great bulk of the public park land in Utica.
- Utica's Olmsted system is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Utica is the smallest community in the country to have an Olmsted park and parkway system.



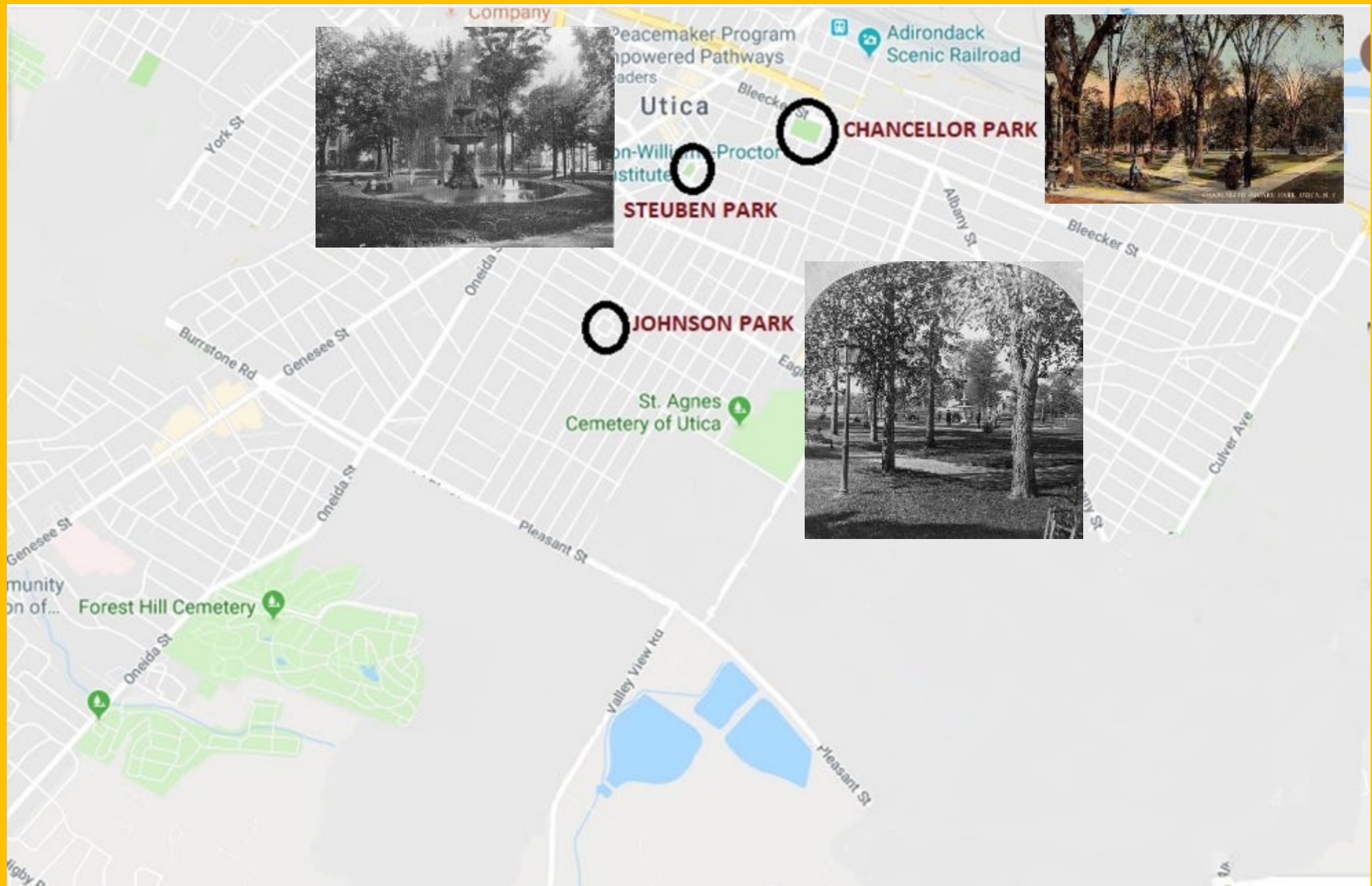




A TENDENCY TO BE VOLUBLE AND GREGARIOUS.  
A FRONT STOOP SCENE TO BE MET WITH AT EVERY TURN IN THE ITALIAN QUARTER.

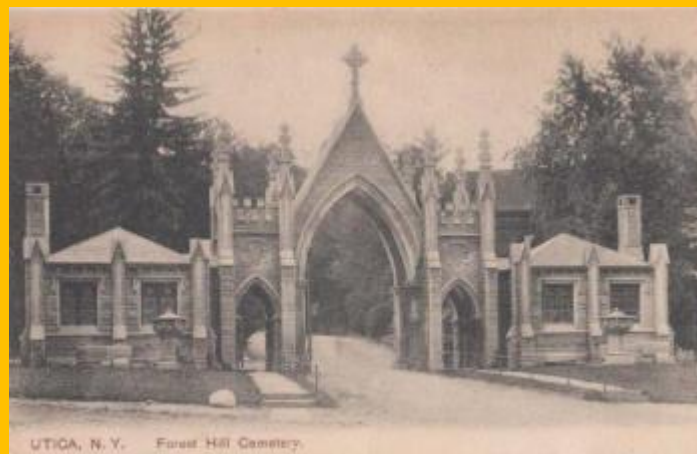




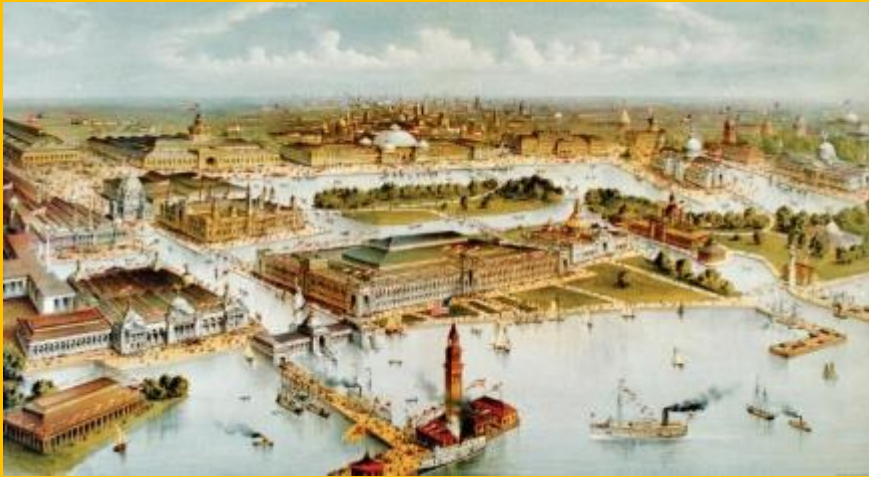


Utica's Parks in 1897











*“The enjoyment of scenery employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it; tranquilizes it and yet enlivens it.”*

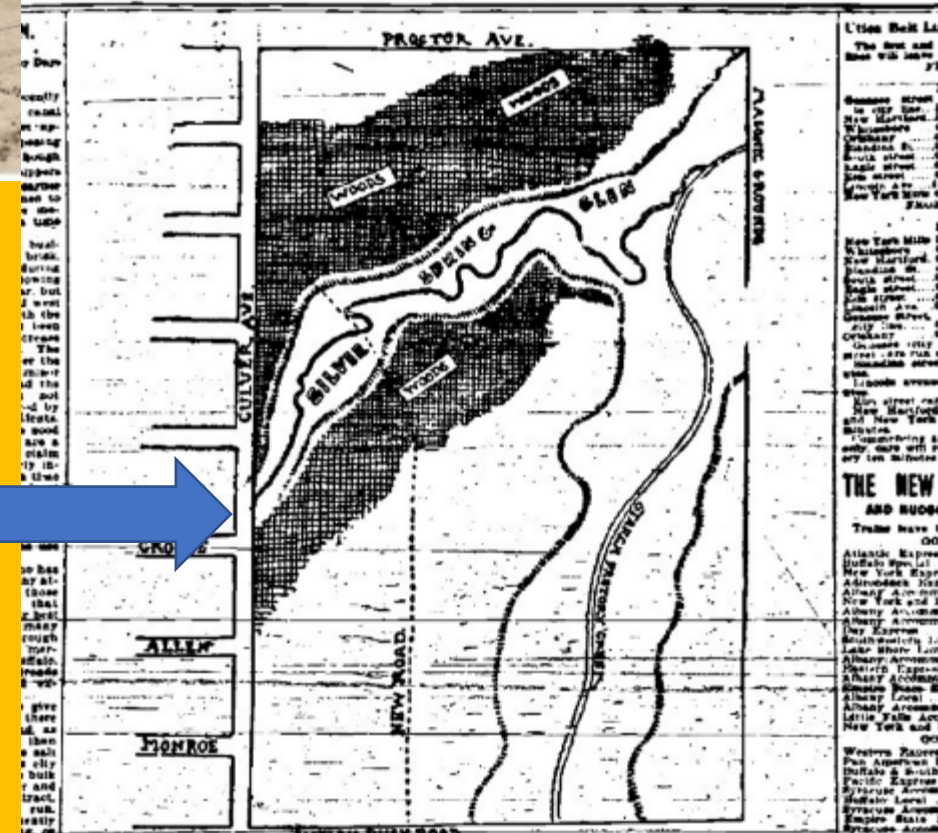
*Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.*

*“It is one great purpose of the Park to supply to the hundreds of thousands of tired workers, who have no opportunity to spend their summers in the country, a specimen of God’s handiwork that shall be to them, inexpensively, what a month of two in the White Mountains or the Adirondacks is, at great cost, to those in easier circumstances.”*





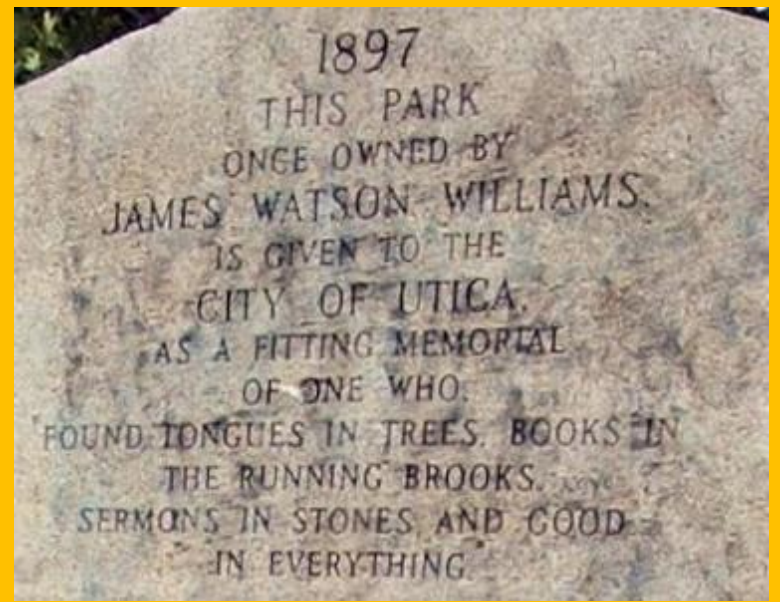
UTICA SUNDAY TRIBUNE, MAY 14, 1890.















OLMSTED BROTHERS,  
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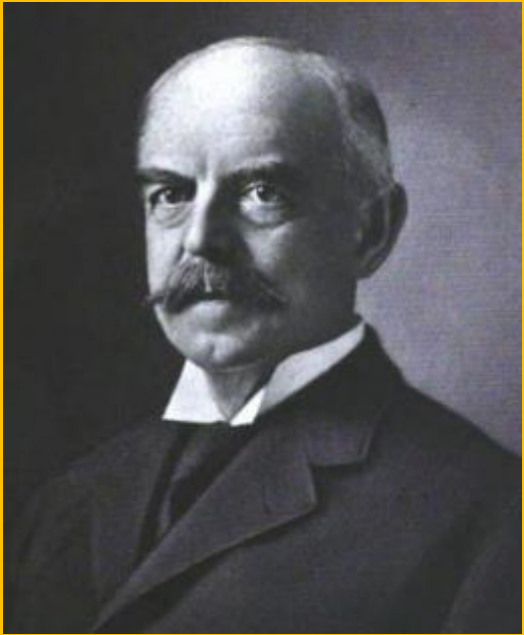
296 Genesee Street, Utica, N. Y.,  
January 18th, 1906.

Mr. F. L. Olmsted, Jr.,  
Brookline, Mass.

My dear Mr. Olmsted:-

Mr. Thomas R. Proctor of Utica is much interested in a park plan here, and when you come back from Sangerfield he would like very much to meet you professionally. We can arrange about the meeting when you arrive here.

Sincerely yours,  
*Thos. R. Proctor*  
by GME





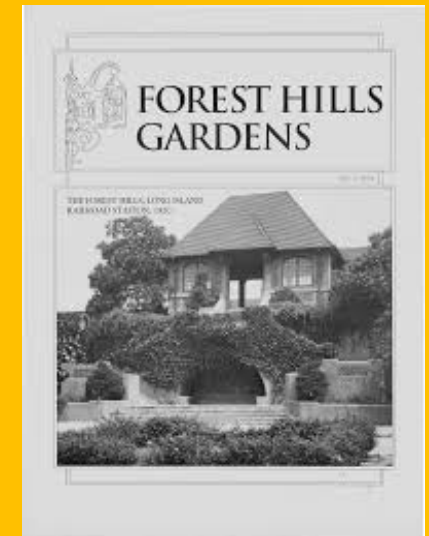
## Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.'s accomplishments included:

- landscape designs for the White House, the National Cathedral, the National Mall, and the Jefferson Memorial;
- founding member of the landscape architecture program at Harvard;
- work on national parks, including Acadia, Everglades and Yosemite, and helped to save the Giant Redwoods;
- leading advocate for the creation of the National Park Service;
- creating neighborhoods like Forest Hill Gardens in Queens and Palos Verdes Estates in Los Angeles County



***"To conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."***

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.  
National Park Service Organic Act (1916)





**English Garden**



**French Garden**



**Olmsted Garden**







**Central Park, New York City**

**MEADOWS**



**Liberty Park, Spokane**

**STONework**



**Iroquois Park, Louisville**

**VISTAS**

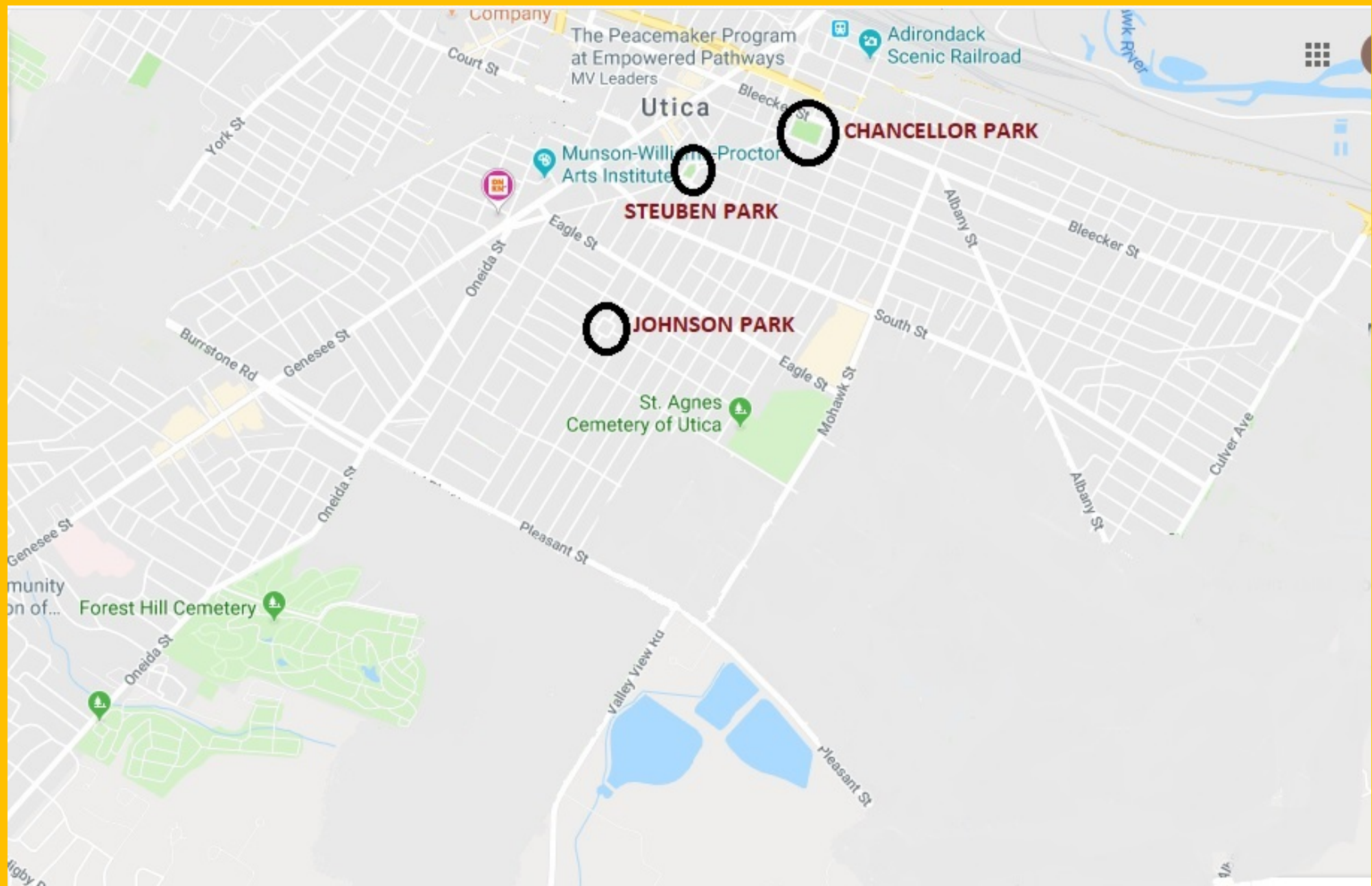


**Prospect Park, Brooklyn**

**WATER FEATURES**

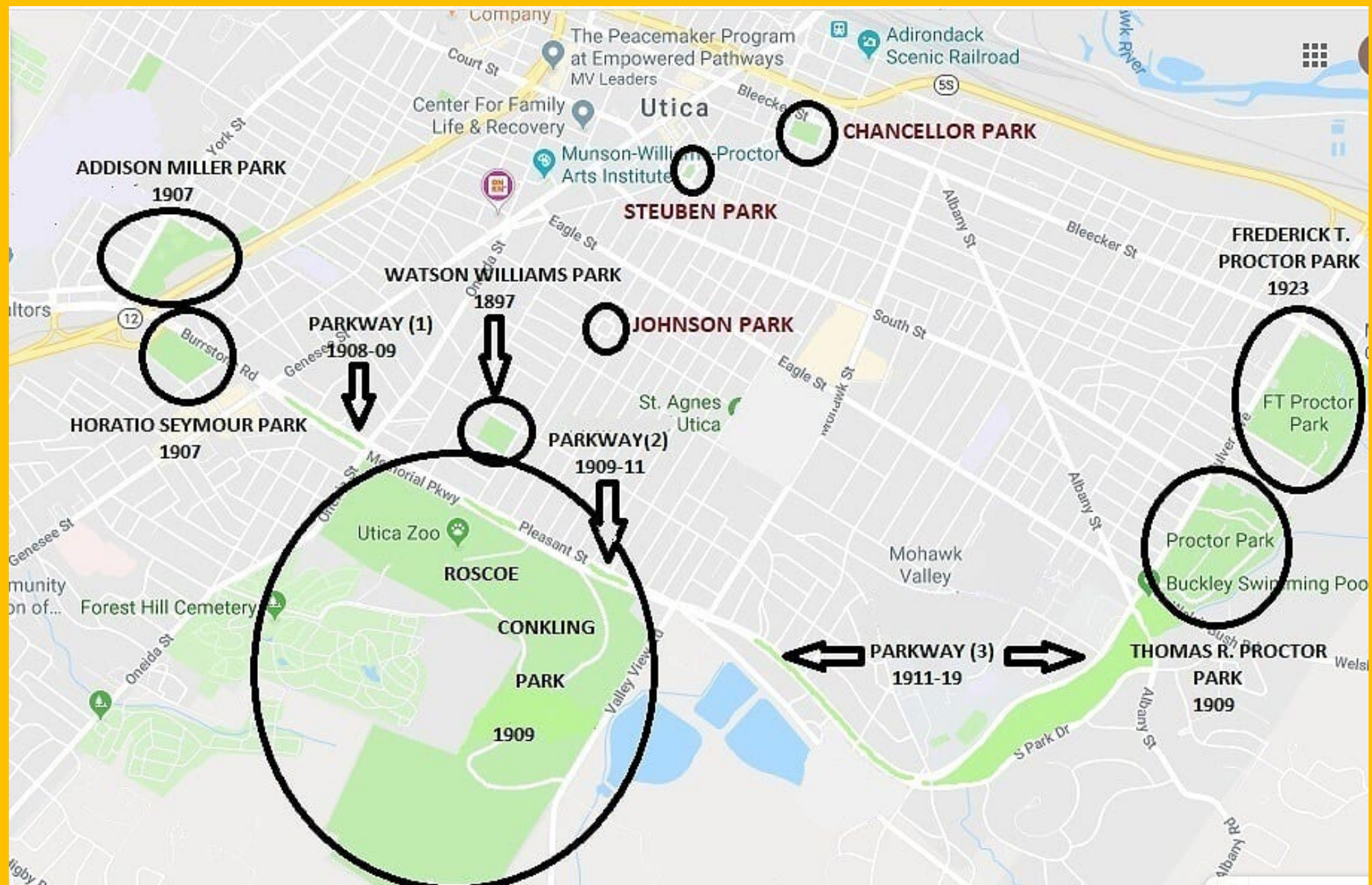






Utica's Parks in 1897





**The Proctor Contribution: Utica's Parks in 1923**



# THOMAS R. PROCTOR'S MAGNIFICENT GIFT

Two Beautiful Parks Covering 440 Acres, Today Formally Turned Over to City Government For the Benefit of Present and Future Generations.

## GOVERNOR HUGHES HERE

Following a Parade, the Exercises Were Held at Roscoe Conkling Park, Where a Tablet Was Unveiled by Miss Catharine Oakman, Roscoe Conkling's Granddaughter.

"My fellow citizens, these parks are yours." In these words today Thomas R. Proctor handed over to the Mayor of the city of Utica, an acreage totaling the amount of 440 acres of beautiful park property—comprising the Roscoe Conkling Park and the Thomas R. Proctor Park, the former lying to the south of the city and the latter to the extreme east. Standing with him on the speaker's stand on the hill top of Roscoe Conkling Park, near the high flagstaff, with "Old Glory" flying in the breeze, Mr. Proctor made this gift to the people of Utica in the simplest manner. A large crowd gathered on the hill and



GIANT BOULDER AT ROSCOE CONKLING PARK.  
It Bore a Tablet That Was Unveiled Today by the Catharine Oakman.

of a 5-Cent Fare All the Time,  
Commission Declares.

The Public Service Commission gave its



# YORK TIMES. SUNDAY, J

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## GOV. HUGHES SPEAKS IN UTICA

Attends Celebration to Commemorate T. R. Proctor's Gift of Two Parks.

UTICA, N. Y., July 3.—Gov. Hughes came down from Saranac Inn to-day to make an address at a celebration held here to commemorate the passing of a deed which gave to the City of Utica two splendid parks. The largest of these tracts contains 370 acres, and is situated on the hills south of the city and overlooking the Mohawk Valley for many miles.

It has taken several years for Thomas R. Proctor of this city to acquire the land comprising this park and fit it up for the use of the city. The whole tract has been provided by Mr. Proctor at his own expense, and will be maintained till Jan. 1 next, when the city will assume full control.

This has been named Roscoe Conkling Park, and a granddaughter of Senator Conkling, Miss Catharine Oakman of New York City, to-day unveiled a bronze tablet set in an immense boulder erected on the highest point of the park, on which is inscribed the name of the tract and the fact that it is given to the City of Utica for the use and benefit of all the people.

The two military companies of Utica, one from Mohawk, the Conkling Unconditionals, and many citizens escorted Gov. Hughes from the city to the site of the boulder. Here Mayor Wheeler presided, and in a few words Mr. Proctor turned the deeds of the property over to the Mayor. With the deed of Roscoe Conkling Park was also a deed for the Thomas R. Proctor Park, which comprises about 70 acres in the eastern part of the city, and which was fitted up by the donor several years ago and thrown open for the use of the city.

A body of singers made up from all the church choirs in Utica and several hundred school children sang "The Star-Spangled Banner," and then Gov. Hughes

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Carriage and Fast Horse Used—Mrs. Clark, Divorced Wife of Forrest Clark, Kidnapped Boy 8 Months Ago.

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This is  
**Ridgewood**  
 Where City and Country Meet

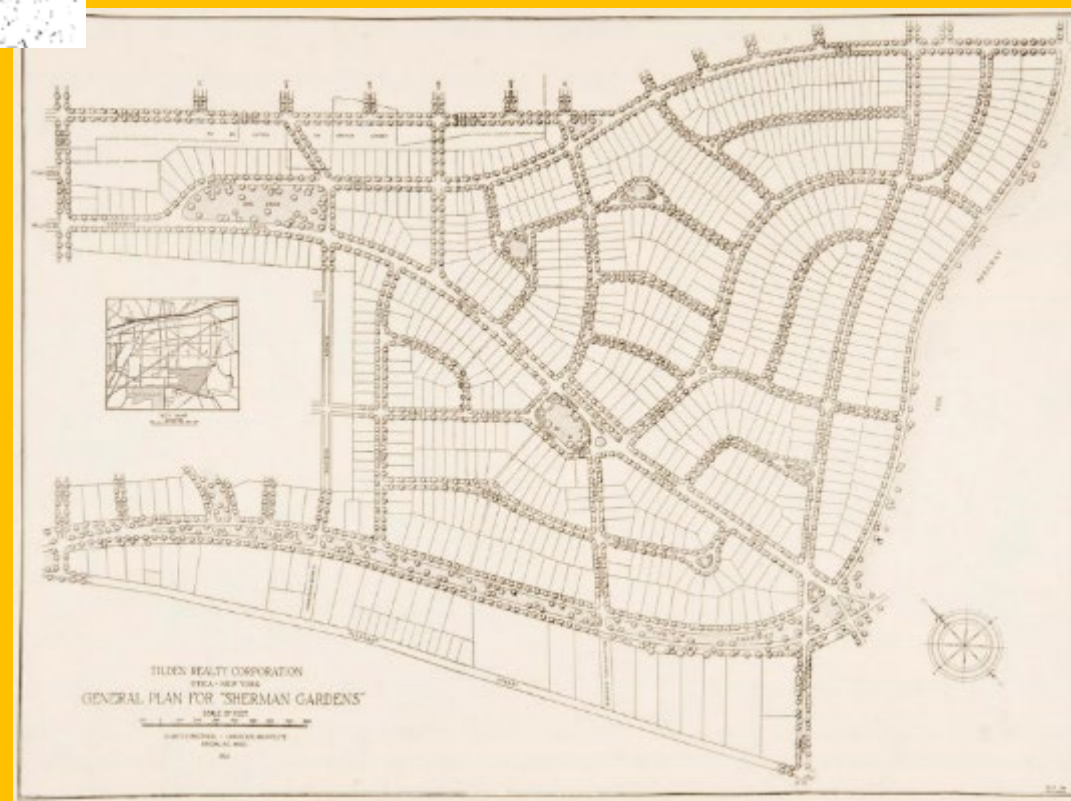
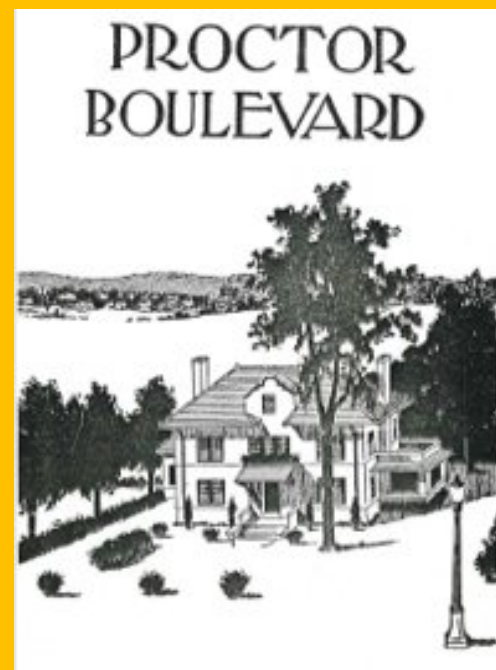
As Seen From the Air

Ridgewood is one of the most rapidly growing one-family home sections in Central New York.

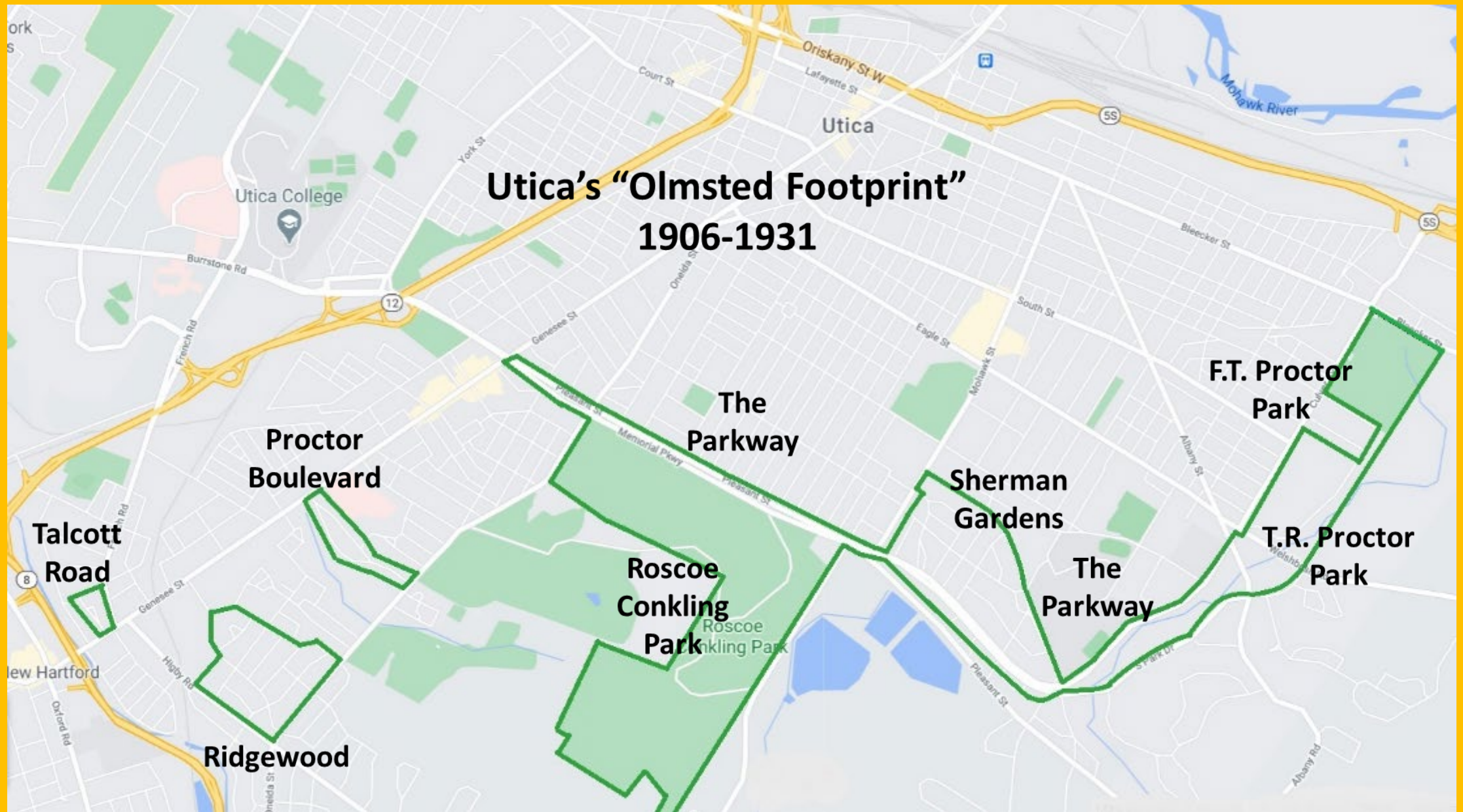
New streets, new homes and every city improvement. Every lot sensibly restricted and with sizes and prices to meet the needs of any potential home owner.

Platted by Olmsted Brothers of Brookline and developed and offered for sale by

**HUGH R. JONES COMPANY**









## Lost Features of the Olmsted Design: The Ponds





## Lost Features of the Olmsted Design



A pool in the Thomas R. Proctor Park at Utica, New York.  
The garden furniture here is of  
Vermont marble.





## Lost Features of the Olmsted Design







THIS PROPERTY HAS BEEN  
PLACED ON THE  
**NATIONAL REGISTER  
OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
BY THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR





Coordinate volunteers



Restore historic trails

Give free advice to the City of Utica on planting trees

Educate the public and advocate for Utica's Olmsted system



Repair historic stonework



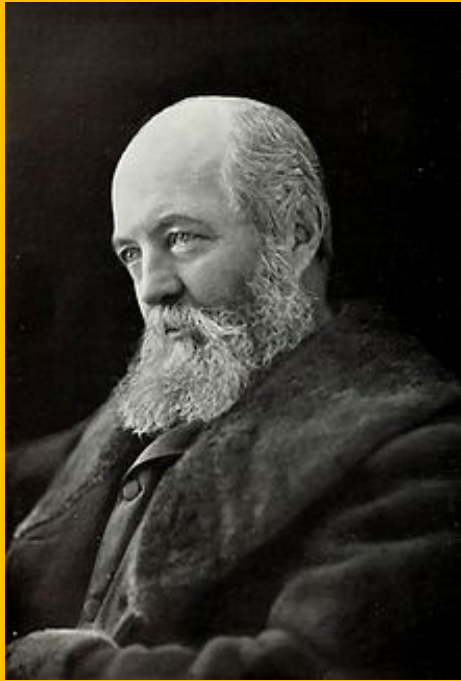
Plant 30-60 trees and water 60-120 annually in the parks and on the Parkway



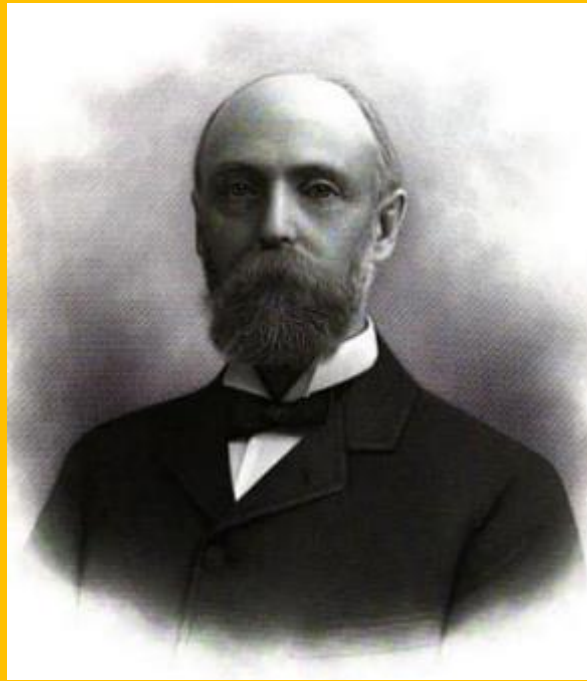
Plant and water thousands of flowers twice annually



## Opportunity: The Anniversaries



**Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.  
1822-1903  
(200<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2022)**



**Thomas R. Proctor  
1844-1920  
(Centennial of death in 2020)**



**Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.  
1870-1957  
(150<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2020)**

**In addition, the year 2023 will mark the centennial of the donation of  
F.T. Proctor Park to the people of Utica.**





*Central New York*  
**CONSERVANCY**  
PRESERVING UTICA'S OLMSTED PARKS

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Utica, NY 13501  
(315) 790-5262

[www.uticaolmstedparks.org/](http://www.uticaolmstedparks.org/)





