

Sweet Auburn

Fall 1989

The Newsletter of the Friends of Mount Auburn

Mount Auburn's Lost Architecture

Throughout Mount Auburn's history, the natural landscape of the Cemetery has evolved with the seasons and with the benefit of conscientious horticultural care. Over the years, the architectural landscape of Mount Auburn has also seen change. Buildings once integral to both the Cemetery's form and function now exist only in photographs, guidebook accounts, and Trustees' reports. Details from these archival sources have been compiled in the following descriptions in order to re-create images of an architectural landscape no longer visible at Mount Auburn today.

Receiving Tomb

At a meeting of the Trustees on November 23, 1869, a committee was appointed to "consider and report" a plan for a new Receiving Tomb. An increase in the Cemetery's business had made it necessary to consider additional temporary crypt space. Two years later, \$6,000 was approved for the construction of the tomb, designed by G. J. F. Bryant. By 1876, the regrading of land for drainage into Auburn Lake had made it "impracticable" to carry out the original plans for entrances from both Fountain and Rosebay Avenues, and an additional \$12,000 was allotted for the construction and completion of the Tomb with modifications. Heavy iron gates of open-work fronted Rosebay Avenue, opening onto a 17 foot square vestibule, "arched with brick and floored with colored tiles." Beyond a second pair of lighter iron gates stretched the 45 x 10 foot main hall, which accommodated 120 columbaria. A circular stained glass window allowed light from the extreme end, with additional light and ventilation supplied from above. The addition of iron sheeting behind the entrance gates during the winter season provided protection from the elements. Although originally intended to replace an older, now sealed, receiving tomb on Greenbrier Path, both tombs were in use until 1884. The new Receiving Tomb was demolished in 1973 in order to build the Auburn Court Crypt Garden.

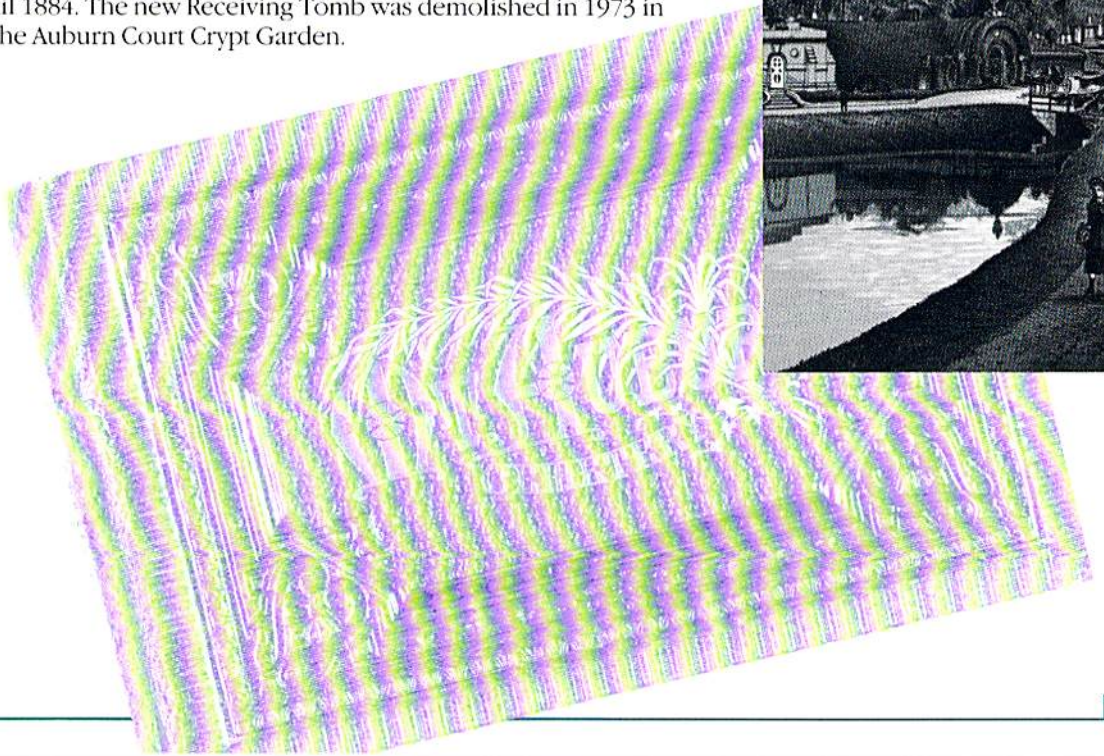
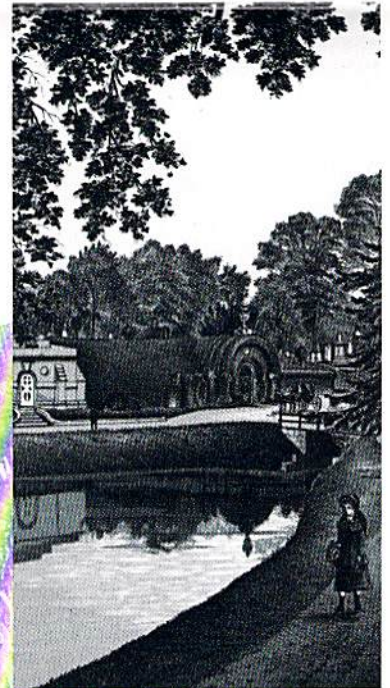
William C. Clendaniel
President
Mount Auburn Cemetery

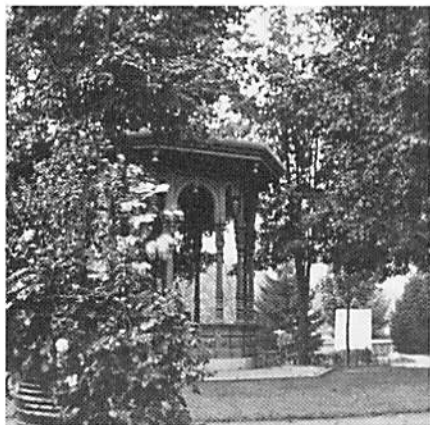
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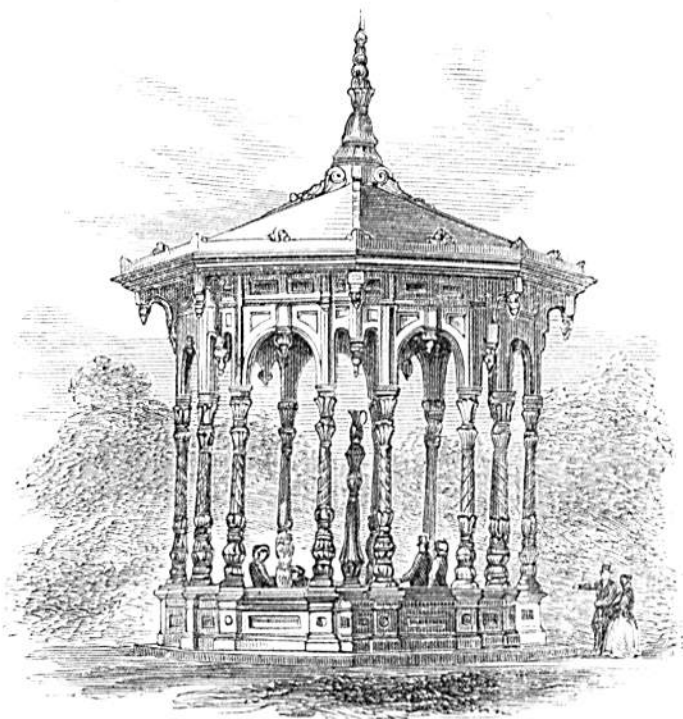




Well House

The 1885 edition of Moses King's guide book, *Mount Auburn Cemetery*, notes that "on the left of Central Avenue, is a beautifully embellished octagonal building, with a stone platform and seats for visitors [containing] an excellent well of pure water." Designed by Theodore Voelckers and constructed in 1852 at a cost of about \$3,000, the Well House provided a place of refreshment for Mount Auburn's visitors for nearly half a century. Originally located on the site of the present Administration Building, it was removed to the southern gate in 1896. There, "surrounded by shrubbery and covered with vines," it stood, presumably, until replaced by the new Rest House.

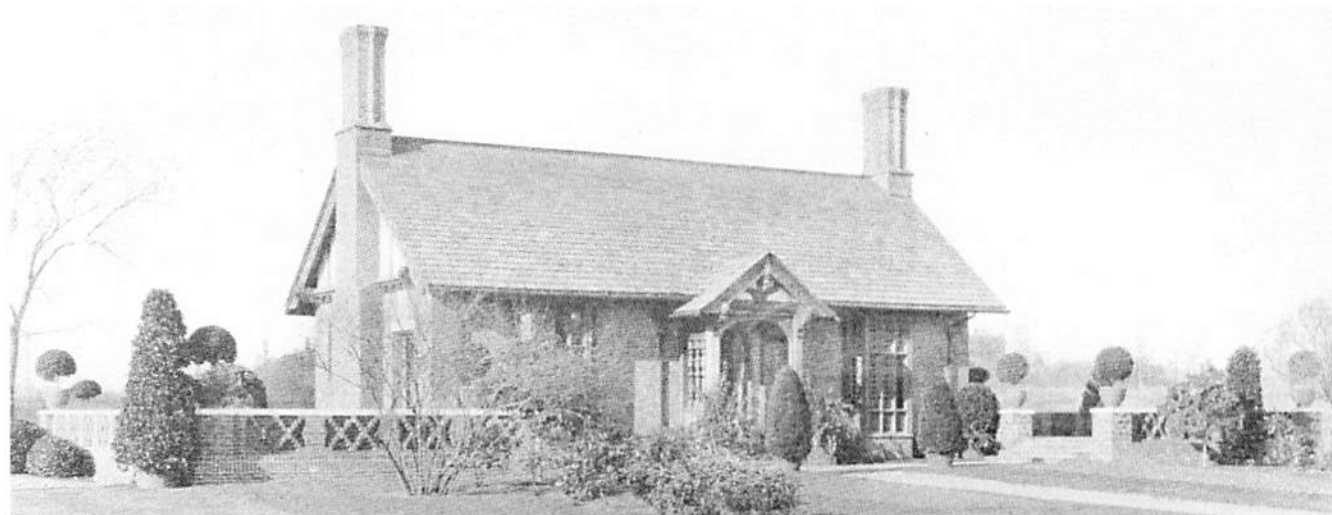
Rest House, ca. 1922



Well House, from Moses King guidebook, 1885 (above) and stereopticon view, ca. 1910 (left)

Rest House

The Rest House, designed in 1920 by architect Ralph Huntington Doane, was completed in 1921 at the cost of \$53,479. In addition to restrooms, the building consisted of a general waiting room, and a ladies waiting room, each leading through hand-carved oak french doors to a landscaped terrace. Contract specifications called for the ladies waiting room fireplace architrave and plinths to be of "African black and gold marble," the doors to be equipped with "solid bronze statuary," and the roof to be composed of slates of "variegated effects in grays, greens, purples and garnet reds." The Rest House was the third such structure at Mount Auburn intended to "afford a proper place in which to rest and wait." (In 1870, a Reception House was built on the Cemetery's newly purchased Wyeth estate opposite the main gate, while the present 1898 Administration Building contained a furnished waiting room for ladies.) The Rest House was located on Bigelow Avenue between Story and Bradlee Roads, and was removed in 1975 to allow for development of that area.





Pump House, stereopticon view, ca. 1910

Pump House

According to Mount Auburn's Annual Report for 1860, "fountains [were] among the highest ornaments in landscape gardening" and "the construction of fountains in suitable parts of the Cemetery [had] long been thought a desirable object of the Trustees." Doubtless inspired by competition with The Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York, the Trustees appointed \$8,000 to the project, with the Massachusetts Horticultural Society voting to contribute an additional \$1,500 so that wells could be dug, res-

response to the drought of 1892. By 1893, the system produced a source of water ample for all of the Cemetery's needs. In 1968, the Pump House was removed and the present one constructed closer to the Cemetery's periphery on Magnolia Avenue to allow for development of the land bordering Auburn Lake.

These onetime structures belonging to Mount Auburn's architectural past were both built, and then destroyed, in an effort to keep in step with the technology and social conditions of the times. Their brief presence in the landscape of the Cemetery reflects the swift and permanent change of a bygone age.

Kathleen D. Leslie, MAC Librarian/Archivist

All illustrations for this article are from the Mount Auburn Cemetery Archives.

*The Pump House
housed the steam engine and pump,
which were capable of
easily raising 300 or 400
gallons per minute.*

ervoirs constructed and pipes laid. A brick Pump House, measuring 28 × 22 feet, with the later addition of a smith shop, was built at the east end of Auburn Lake. It housed the steam engine and pump, which were "capable of easily raising 300 or 400 gallons per minute," and which were expected to throw water to the height of about one hundred feet above the level of the lake. Power from the pump house was also the eventual source of jets in the center of the Lawn Garden (now Asa Gray), Hazel Dell, Alice Fountain, and Halcyon Lake. Over the years, the waterworks became more sophisticated, in part owing to the demands of the perpetual care of lots. "Lightening"-shattered pipes were replaced in 1890 and newer pumps added in

Pump House, ca. 1945



Photo by Haskell

Mount Auburn's New Trustees

History was made at the March 1989 Trustee meeting when Ann C. Roosevelt was elected Mount Auburn Cemetery's first woman Trustee. She was soon joined by Marion R. Fremont-Smith, who was elected a Trustee at the May 1989 meeting. At the time of their elections, Mount Auburn President, William C. Clendaniel, stated: "We are delighted to have these two distinguished women join our board. As we plan for the Cemetery's future, they will bring valuable experience, both from their professional lives as well as from their years as Cambridge residents."

Ann Roosevelt, who is a lifelong resident of Cambridge and lives just around the corner from the Cemetery, has known Mount Auburn well over the years from weekend visits here with her three children and from their school trips. She is a graduate of Radcliffe College and has served as Legislative Director of Friends of the Earth in Washington, D.C. Today she is President of the Environmental Lobby of Massachusetts, a leading advocate of environmental issues at the state level, and she also serves as a member of the national Board of Directors of Friends of the Earth.

Marion Fremont-Smith also lives in Cambridge and has enjoyed coming to Mount Auburn over the years. A graduate of Wellesley College and Boston University Law School, she is a partner in the Boston law firm of Choate, Hall & Stewart. She specializes in trusts and estates and the law concerning tax-exempt organizations. Marion formerly served as the Director of the Division of Public Charities in the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office and currently serves as a trustee of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Women's Educational and Industrial Union. She is an overseer of the Museum of Fine Arts and chairman of the American Bar Association Committee on Exempt Organizations.




*Ann Roosevelt (left) and
Marion Fremont-Smith (below),
are new Trustees of
Mount Auburn Cemetery*



Photos by Peter Southwick

From Mount Auburn's President

It's been a year since I last wrote you in this newsletter, and I would like to share with you some of the interesting new things we have been doing and talking about.

We are excited about the work of the Long Range Planning Committee, a small group of Trustees and staff who have been meeting regularly to think about our future. We've held four roundtable discussions with people from many disciplines, stimulating a number of creative new ideas. These meetings have strongly confirmed the importance of what Mount Auburn has represented for nearly 160 years. We firmly believe that this Cemetery will continue to provide vital services in the years ahead, not only as a place of interment and memorialization, but also as an oasis of quiet and great beauty in an increasingly noisy and fast-paced world.

To meet new needs and beautify some areas of the Cemetery, we will be providing additional interment and memorialization options. One example is a woodland garden for cremation burial; another is a series of opportunities to endow, in the name of a family member, particular features at Mount Auburn, such as trees, benches, vistas, a new organ in Story Chapel or new fountains. We encourage those with special ideas for memorialization that fit into the present character of the Cemetery to talk with either me or Roger Kindred.

The Trustees also believe we should develop a physical master plan for the maintenance of the Cemetery to ensure the preservation of special landscape areas, guide future plantings, and help keep costs under control while maintaining our traditionally high standards. Mount Auburn's landscape is admired world-wide, and we want to bequeath the same level of quality to our successors. This project is a challenging one that will keep us all busy for some time to come.

One of the most intriguing ideas that the Long Range Planning Committee has been discussing is the possibility of a new, and perhaps quite different, cemetery at a new location. The goal would be to provide a special place for interment and remembrance in the same way as Mount Auburn did in 1831.

As you know, we are already involved with educational programs through the Friends. We have a wonderful collection of resources here at Mount Auburn, and over the last few years we have reached out to the public in an effort to make them more accessible. We have been gratified by the response. The membership of the Friends has grown steadily, as has attendance at our programs. We now want to reach out in new ways. One example is a musical program scheduled for December. If successful, we hope to sponsor more.

Another way in which we will be reaching out is by improving our interpretive and directional signs and expanding our range of publications, so that visitors can more easily learn about Mount Auburn's extraordinary diversity. Librarian/Archivist Kathleen Leslie's continuing work in cataloging and planning for the preservation of our archives is a vital part of this effort.

A further part of our educational effort is to let people know what interment and memorialization opportunities exist at Mount Auburn. We have done some limited advertising in local papers, spreading the word that we are still an active cemetery. The ads have described our above-ground crypts and our cremation options which are in

An Invitation to Join The Friends of Mount Auburn

Please enroll me as a member of the Friends of Mount Auburn.

- Senior Citizens/Students \$10
- Individual \$15
- Family \$25
- Contributor \$50

In addition to my membership dues, I would also like to contribute \$ _____ to help defray the costs of the Friends.

Contributions over membership dues are deductible from income taxes to the extent provided by law.

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ payable to *Mount Auburn Cemetery*.

M
Name(s)

Address

Telephone

If you would like this to be a gift membership, please enclose your name and address so that we may notify the recipient.

**Friends of Mount Auburn
Mount Auburn Cemetery
580 Mount Auburn Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
617/547-7105**

greater supply than our traditional in-ground burial space. The results so far have been rewarding.

We are also exploring whether we should offer additional assistance to families at the time of a death. Providing information on the choices and resources available in the community may help people better cope with that very difficult time in their lives.

We will soon be refurbishing the Administration Building to provide better working space for the staff and more attractive areas for the public. Built in 1898 to house a much smaller staff, the building was last renovated over 15 years ago. Architect Ann Beha, known for her work with historic buildings, has provided creative and sensitive designs for our current needs.

We are excited about all these new developments and welcome your reactions. We thank you for your past interest and support. I am always happy to hear from any of you, so please don't hesitate to call or write.



William C. Clendaniel, President



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Friends of Mount Auburn
Mount Auburn Cemetery
580 Mount Auburn Street
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Receiving Tomb, MAC Archives, ca. 1930