

# Sweet Auburn

Fall/Winter 1987

*The Newsletter of the Friends of Mount Auburn*

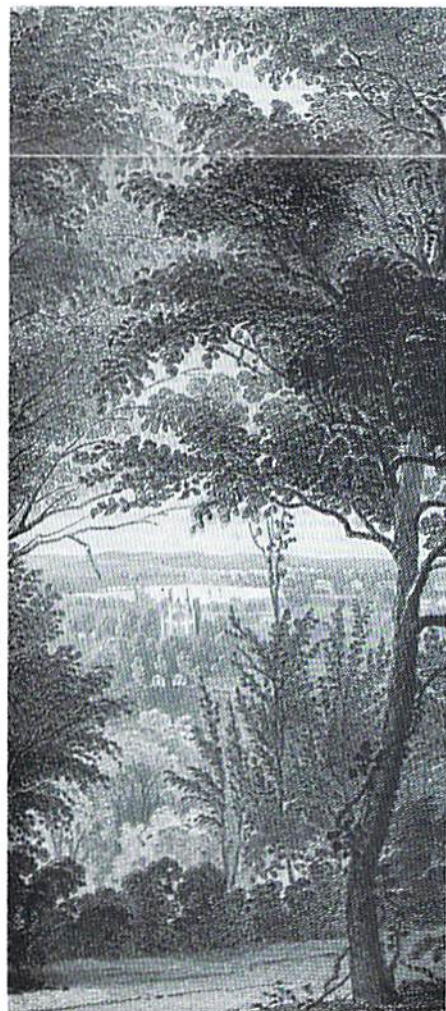
*Dr. Jacob Bigelow was a founder and Trustee of Mount Auburn Cemetery from 1831 to 1860. In 1859 while he was President, he published a small volume titled A History of the Cemetery of Mount Auburn, to record "the successful experiment of Mount Auburn."*

*Reprinted below is an excerpt from his book. The report was written by three of the original Trustees of the Cemetery, General Henry A. S. Dearborn, Dr. Bigelow, and Mr. George W. Brimmer, and is the most authoritative description of the aims of the founders. It is believed that, indeed, one hundred and fifty six years later, Mount Auburn Cemetery reflects the "solemnity and beauty" that the founding Trustees envisioned.*

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## A Report on Mount Auburn Cemetery, 1831

**T**he tract of land which received the name of Mount Auburn, is situated on the southerly side of the main road leading from Cambridge to Watertown, and is partly within the limits of each of those towns. Its distance from Boston is about four miles. The place was formerly known by the name of Stone's Woods, the title to most of the land having remained in the family of Stone, from an early period after the settlement of the country. Within a few years, previous to the date of the consecration, the hill and part of the woodland had been offered for sale, and were purchased by George W. Brimmer, Esq., whose object was to prevent the destruction of the trees, and to preserve so beautiful a spot for some public or appropriate use. The purchase which has now been made by the Horticultural Society, includes between seventy and eighty acres, extending from the road, nearly to the banks of the Charles River. A portion of the land situated next to the road, and now under cultivation, is intended to constitute the Experimental Garden of the Horticultural Society. A long watercourse extending between this tract and the interior woodland, forms a natural boundary, separating the two sections. The inner portion, which is set apart for the purposes of a Cemetery, is covered throughout most of its extent with vigorous growth of forest trees, many of them of large size, and comprising an unusual variety of kinds. This tract is beautifully undulating in its surface, containing a number of bold eminences, steep acclivities, and deep shadowy valleys. A remarkable natural ridge with a level surface runs through the ground from the south-east to north-west, and has for many years been known as a secluded

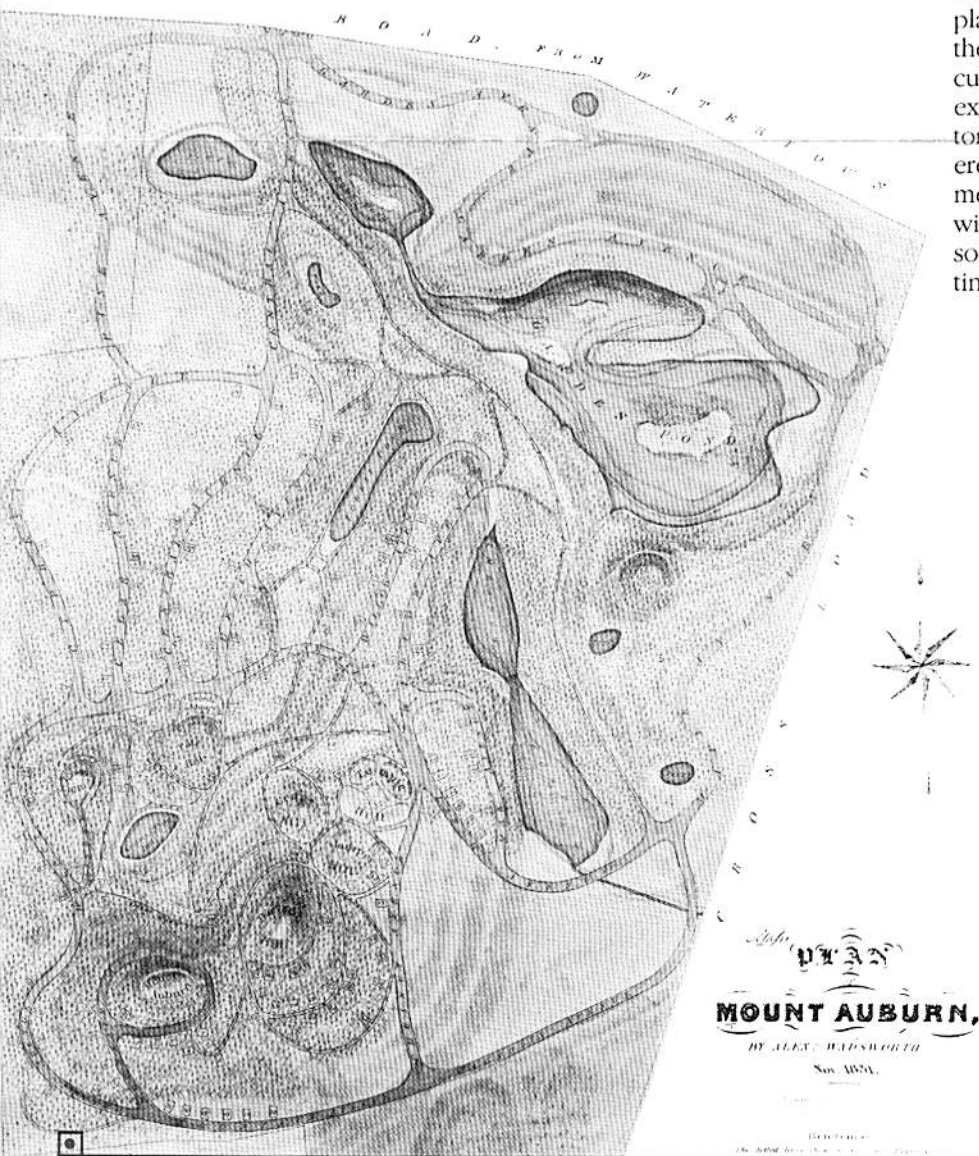


and favorite walk. The principle eminence, called Mount Auburn in the plan, is one hundred and twenty-five feet above the level of the Charles River, and commands from its summit one of the finest prospects which can be obtained in the environs of Boston. On one side is the city in full view, connected at its extremities with Charlestown and Roxbury. The serpentine course of the Charles River, with the cultivated hills and fields rising beyond it, and having the Blue Hills of Milton in the distance, occupies another portion of the landscape. The village of Cambridge, with the venerable edifices of Harvard University, are situated about a mile to the eastward. On the north, at a very small distance, Fresh Pond appears, a handsome sheet of water, finely diversified by its woody and irregular shores. Country seats and cottages seen in various directions, and especially those on the elevated land at

Watertown, add much to the picturesque effect of the scene. It is proposed to erect on the summit of Mount Auburn, a Tower, after some classic model, of sufficient height to rise above the tops of the surrounding trees. This will serve the double purpose of a landmark to identify the spot from a distance, and of an observatory commanding an uninterrupted view of the country around it. From the foot of this monument will be seen in detail the features of the landscape, as they are successively presented through the different vistas which have been opened among the trees; while from its summit, a magnificent and unbroken panorama, embracing one of the most delightful tracts in New England, will be spread out beneath the eye. Not only the contiguous country, but the harbor and bay of Boston, with their ships and islands, and, in a clear atmosphere, the distant mountains of Wachusett, and probably even of

Monadnock, will be comprehended within the range of vision.

The grounds of the Cemetery have been laid out with intersecting avenues, so as to render every part of the woods accessible. These avenues are curved and variously winding in their course, so as to be adapted to the natural inequalities of the surface. By this arrangement, the greatest economy of the land is produced, combining at the same time the picturesque effect of landscape gardening. Over the more level portions, the avenues are about twenty feet wide, and are suitable for carriage roads. The more broken and precipitous parts are approached by foot-paths, about six feet in width. These passage-ways are to be smoothly gravelled and planted on both sides with flowers and ornamental shrubs. Lots of ground, containing each three hundred square feet, are set off, as family burial places, at suitable distances on the sides of the avenues and paths. The perpetual right of inclosing and of using these lots as places of sepulture, is conveyed to the purchasers of them, by the Horticultural Society. It is confidently expected that many of the proprietors will, without delay, proceed to erect upon their lots such monuments and appropriate structures as will give to the place a part of the solemnity and beauty which it is destined ultimately to acquire.



## Dear Members,

The past two months have been most fruitful as the Friends programs received enthusiastic support. In early September, 30 participants observed over 40 migrating Nighthawks from Washington Tower with birder Robert Stymeist. Art critic Charles Giuliano presented a delightful slide/lecture to 40 Friends on "The Boston Painters: from Impressionism to Expressionism." Naturalist/author Clare Walker Leslie shared her expertise on "Nature in Transition" at Mount Auburn; over 35 Friends joined her walking tour as we observed signs of plants and animals in autumn preparing for winter. Most recently, historian Barbara Rotundo delighted over 35 walkers with an informative tour of Mount



Photo by Peter Southwick

Auburn history, discussing three women of particular interest, Hannah Adams, Fannie M. Farmer, and "Missy" A. LeHand.

I would like to express my sincere thanks for the hospitable welcome I have received from the Mount Auburn staff. They are dedicated individuals, and collectively they administer their responsibilities with pride and warmth. I am delighted to be working with them.

It has been a pleasure greeting Friends at our fall programs, working with volunteers, and corresponding with those of you at a distance. I wish to thank you all for welcoming me to my new position with your active participation and interest in the Friends.

Please feel free to call or write me with any suggestions or questions you have regarding the Friends. I look forward to exploring Mount Auburn's heritage with you and to increasing our role in the community. I encourage you to participate in the Friends of Mount Auburn; we have so much to learn from each other and from this historic landscape.

Jean L. Rosenberg

## Accolades for Mount Auburn

It is a pleasure to announce that Arlington, MA, freelance photographer John Baynard was presented a first prize by the Boston Press Photographers Association for a special television video on "Birding in Mount Auburn Cemetery." At the June 1987 awards dinner, Mr. Baynard accepted the "Best of Show" Boston University Medical Center Award for his WNEV-TV television special. For members who may remember this brief film aired in 1986, MAC birder Robert Stymeist was featured leading a warbler migration walk. Congratulations to Mr. Baynard, and on behalf of the staff of Mt. Auburn, we thank him for recognizing the Cemetery as an integral part of Boston's natural history.

The September issue of *Horticulture* magazine captured the essence of Mt. Auburn Cemetery in an article titled "The Garden of Earthly Remains," by Jerry Howard, free-lance writer and photographer of Natick, MA. This article includes superb color photographs of the Cemetery, and Mr. Howard's fluent writing style is a joy. Friends are encouraged to read this issue to gain further appreciation for the history and management of Mount Auburn. Special thanks are extended to Mr. Howard for his sensitive and outstanding portrayal of the Cemetery. (Mr. Howard also published an article on Mt. Auburn in the Massachusetts Audubon Society's *Sanctuary* magazine, March 1985, titled "Magnificent Obsession," that focused on birding at the Cemetery. This article is available at the Cemetery's front office.)



### Did You Know...

...that Henry Dexter's 1842 memorial to Emily Binney was the first full-length marble statue ever done in Boston?

...that on the 1831 Plan of Mount Auburn by Alexander Wadsworth six hills were designated? They were Temple Hill, Pine Hill, Laurel Hill, Harvard Hill, Cedar Hill, and Juniper Hill. (See map p. 2 of newsletter)

...that birder Robert Stymeist recorded over 2,000 migrating Nighthawks from Mt. Auburn's Washington Tower this past August and September?

## The Vistas of Mount Auburn

In 1859, Dr. Jacob Bigelow wrote of Mount Auburn:

"The ground as seen from the top of the Tower, now looks like a dense, impenetrable forest, in which most of the monuments are concealed from view by the contiguous branches. . . . The Trustees have endeavored in part to abate this evil by thinning out the wood, pruning branches, and cutting away useless trees, and this work is still in gradual progress.

The perfection of Mount Auburn, as far as its natural features are concerned, would be attained by—leaving broad vistas and open spaces, through which works of art could be seen; and the light of the sun might be admitted to the grass and cultivated flowers, to the health of which it is indispensable."

When I began my new position at the Cemetery in July, the Cemetery's Arborist Phil Sands described to me a project he had been working on. After consulting with Assistant Superintendent Roger Kindred, Superintendent Duncan Munro, and President Alan Chesney, he began to create vistas, the same kind of vistas that Bigelow described. The map he showed me had over three dozen

vistas planned; thus far he had completed over a dozen. Phil explained that, "One must envision what the vista is going to look like. It's a matter of picturing in one's mind the different high points we have." He noted that the challenge of creating views is "to see a vista in a way we haven't noticed before—or for some years." He stated he hopes "to give a feeling of distance, creating mini-landscapes."

We walked up Indian Ridge Path and looked east from the Francis Parkman monument (See C7 #41 on the map) across Halcyon Lake toward the Mary Baker Eddy memorial. Phil commented, "The challenge was to balance the tree on both sides with careful pruning." His goal was to "frame a picture, and let branches arch over the view." He again reminded me that, "It is necessary to envision what the vista is going to look like, without destroying trees."

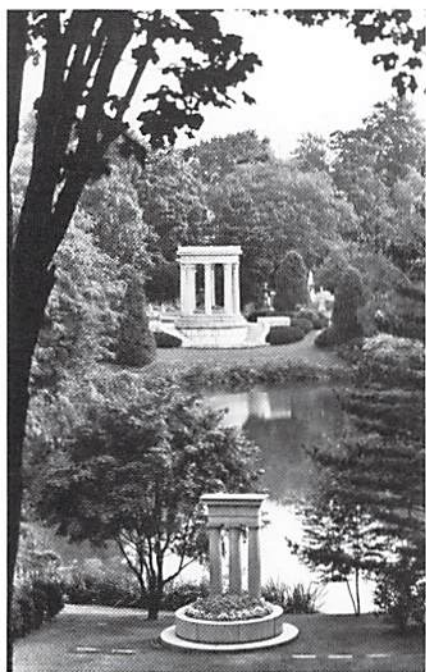
Then we approached Willow Avenue at the northern end of Auburn Lake. Vistas had been created looking southeast over the lake, across from the Theodore W. Richards monument (See C6 #46 on the map). Phil stated that he had taken seasonal photographs of this scene to examine the changes in

light. He said, "The eye moves from foreground to background as light changes the picture, and we notice changes in the lake views as the sun moves east to west." "The fun," he added, "was to observe vistas at different times of the year, different times of the day." This view had been "a green wall, and one couldn't see a thing." Phil's objective was to frame the vista with two trees. And he informed me that, "the real challenge in pruning and limbing up trees was to bury or hide the cuts."

He acknowledged that, "Not every landscape is dramatic, some are just quite pretty. Yet in the right light or season, a vista may become very dramatic." The key, however, was to create "something for people to discover. It is possible," he added, "to make vistas look natural, to be discovered."

At Mount Auburn today, Phil Sands carries on the tradition of envisioning art in nature. He works closely with Roger Kindred, and they are both proud to admit that in their search to create the picturesque, they continue to discover new vistas of Mount Auburn. It is true, as Jacob Bigelow noted in 1859, "this work is still in gradual progress."

*by Jean L. Rosenberg*



## Biographical Notes

**Mary  
Whiton  
Calkins**  
1863-1930

Born in Hartford, Connecticut, and trained in Buffalo, New York, Mary Whiton Calkins moved to what would be her lifelong home in Newton, Massachusetts in 1880 when her father, a Presbyterian minister, was offered a congregation at the Eliot Church. Phineas Wolcott Calkins (1831-1924) took an active role in supervising his children's studies, and his preparation enabled Mary to enter Smith College in 1882 with advanced sophomore standing. Originally a student of the classics, Mary continued her education after graduating from Smith in 1885 by traveling through Italy and Greece. Upon her return in 1887 she was offered a teaching position in the Greek Department of Wellesley College, where she remained for three years. It was here that her considerable academic talents became apparent, and when a vacancy was announced in the Philosophy Department, Mary was offered the position in a field which had long



interested her on the condition that she prepare by studying psychology for one year. Psychology was a new discipline in 1890 and was regarded as a sub-field of philosophy. Harvard University was one of a few institutions which boasted a psychology laboratory and which offered the opportunity for advanced work in the field. Mary received permission to take seminars at Harvard with William James, Josiah Royce, and later with Hugo Munsterberg from the University of Freiburg. She also became a private pupil of Edmund Sanford of Clark University. In the fall of 1891, as instructor of psychology at Wellesley College, Mary introduced the new course in psychology and established one of the first dozen psychology laboratories in the country. She was granted full professorship in 1901. By 1895, Mary had fulfilled the requirements for the doctoral degree at Harvard University, but was denied the award, despite the recommendations of the faculty, as the prevailing policy did not allow women to matriculate. Between 1892 and her retirement from Wellesley College in 1929, Mary

## An Invitation to Join The Friends of Mount Auburn

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

\_\_\_ Individual \$10

\_\_\_ Household \$20

\_\_\_ Senior Citizens and Students \$5

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  
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617/547-7105**

published over 100 articles and 4 books in psychology and philosophy, including an impressive treatise entitled, *The Persistent Problems of Philosophy*. Her talents were recognized by members of her profession. In 1903 she was ranked 12th out of 50 leading psychologists in the United States. She was elected president of the American Psychological Association in 1905, and of the American Philosophical Association in 1918. She was elected an honorary member and invited to address the 1927 annual meeting of the British Psychological Association. Both Smith and Columbia bestowed honorary doctoral degrees and offered her faculty positions. Her major contribution to the field of psychology is considered to be the development of self-psychology, work which centered around the importance of the self as an individual. She advocated equal treatment of the sexes in education, and was opposed to the concept that there were inherent differences in mental abilities between the sexes. The example of her life was perhaps the strongest evidence of this belief. She died of cancer in 1930.

Mary Whiton Calkins is buried on Laurel Avenue, E5 on the map.

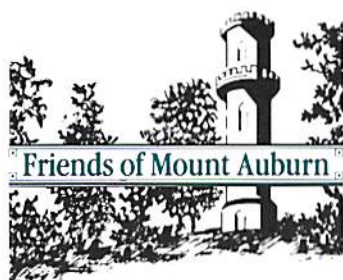
*Written by Kathleen D. Leslie, Mount Auburn Cemetery archivist; Based on an article by Laurel Furumoto, co-author with Elizabeth Scarborough of the recently published Untold Lies: The First Generation of American Women Psychologists.*

*Inside:*

A Report on  
Mount Auburn, 1831

Vistas of Mount Auburn

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