



One Woman's Landscape



ABOVE RIGHT: Nepeta and roses in the extant Ferrand gardens at Eolia, the Harkness house in Waterford, Conn. **TOP:** Beatrix Jones around 1895. **CENTER:** Her sketch for a garden seat for an informal garden in Bar Harbor, ca. 1900. **ABOVE:** Watercolor rendering for the rose trellis at Edith Wharton's Land's End in Newport.

HOW DOES a Victorian woman become a pre-eminent landscape designer and “handle big crews of men with great tact and dignity”? She must be smart and well traveled, unmarried (early in her career), daring, and very talented—and it doesn't hurt if she can draw clients from high society. Beatrix Farrand (Edith Wharton was her aunt) collaborated with Ogden Codman Jr. and designed for the likes of Cornelius Vanderbilt II and Percival Chubb. Her success was, however, hard earned.

The young Beatrix Jones, having decided to “go in for landscape gardening,” devised her own curriculum that included the study of botany and surveying, a five-month educational tour of Europe and its gardens, and private tutoring in civil engineering. She wore rubber boots and fishermen's gear for fieldwork and kept firm control of the earth movers and gardeners.

A new book by Judith Tankard explores the life history and motivations of this influential woman, as well as her designs and surviving gardens. Tankard traces Farrand's career from early commissions for summer gardens

in Bar Harbor, Maine, through estate and university work in Connecticut and on Long Island and later in California. The fascinating text is not only filled with information about the landscapes and clients, but is also a biography of the woman (Beatrix Jones married Yale historian Max Farrand in 1913, when she was forty-one).

Gardens are presented through archival photos and drawings, and surviving gardens are shown in lavish, contemporary color photographs. (They include the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller garden in Seal Harbor, Maine, Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., and the gardens at Hill-Stead in Connecticut, among others.) Farrand is often called “the Gertrude Jekyll of America.”

This is a book of primary research, thoughtfully presented by a scholar who is both rigorous and intuitive. And it's beautiful. ✦

Beatrix Farrand: Private Gardens, Public Landscapes
by Judith B. Tankard.
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