

WOODLAWN PARK

The land that comprises the campus for Skidmore College has a long and storied history, one that still resonates today. Henry Walton bought the acreage in 1819, built the first mansion, and named the property "Woodlawn". In 1879, Henry Hilton purchased the estate and two decades created the magnificent "Woodlawn Park". It had vast open meadows, large Victorian structures for himself, his many important guests and their attendants, stables for horses, and riding trails studded with statuary.

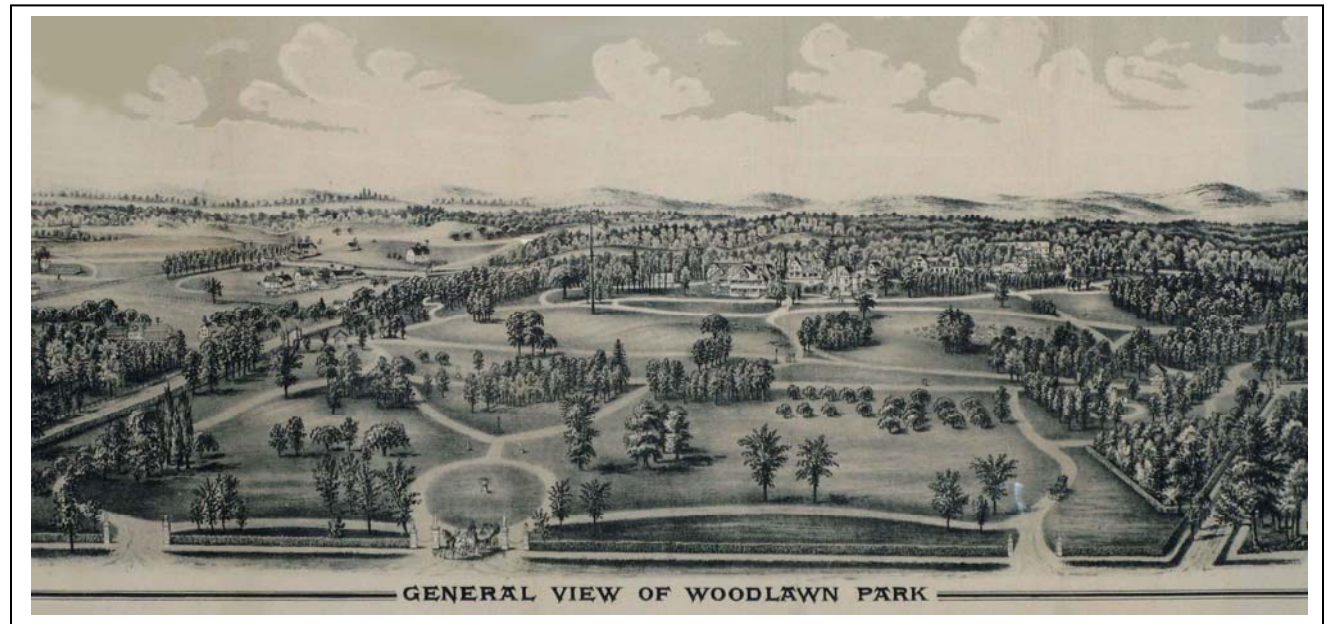
After Hilton died in 1899, his heirs were unable to keep up the extravagant property. The estate was sold at auction in 1916 as eight parcels. While the property changed hands several times, the riding trails and lakes still attracted public use. One location became a favorite spot for a suitor to propose on bended knee. After magnificent first growth trees were cut for lumber, the 1930's to 50's saw buildings destroyed by fire one by one, open meadows became reforested, and vandals completed the destruction.

The southern part of Woodlawn Park is now the core of the Jonsson Campus. The northern part is known as the North Woods. The former riding trails there still attract joggers and dog walkers who see this Skidmore property as part of the public domain. The college, meanwhile, uses the land as a valuable outdoor laboratory for science education and research, requiring much closer stewardship. Some in the Skidmore community see the land as a quiet

place away from the intensity of the core campus. Finally, we as campus planners charting a future for the school and blocked in all directions but north, see the land as the only possible resource for contiguous growth. In this report, we will report a consensus for the future of the North Woods.



Overlay of original Woodlawn Estate Skidmore GIS Center building locations and paths.



View looking north from Clement Street, between Clinton and State Streets

Scribner Library Special Collections