



The Library Branch

The Parks Library

Room 240, The Arsenal, Central Park

64th Street & Fifth Avenue

Number 13

October 2002

Come to the Lunchtime Lecture by Edward S. Barnard, author of: *New York City Trees*

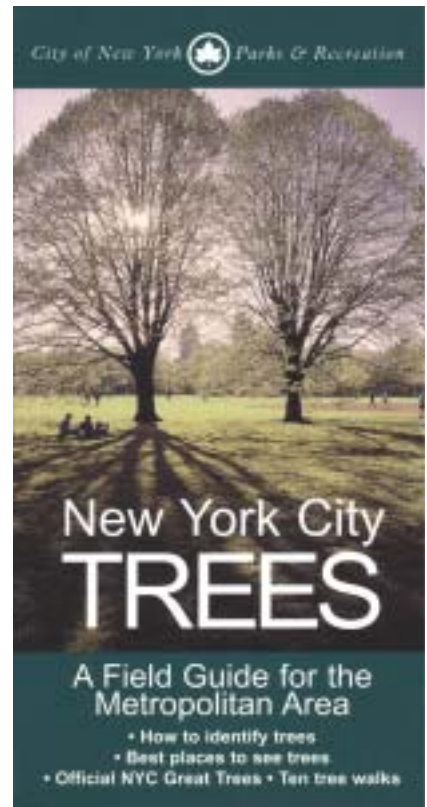
Mr. Barnard will give a lecture and slide show drawing from the 900 images found within his new 242-page book that quickly proves itself a treat and treasure for both the well-read tree lover and the neophyte New Yorker who perhaps had missed both the forest and the trees that this city contains. Whereas there are many tree guides from many different authors that cover various spectrums of forestry: all trees, American trees, trees of the northeast etc., there has never been a book like this. After spending just a few minutes with it however, you will certainly wonder why.

Produced in consultation with Parks (and with a foreword by Commissioner Benepe) this guide contains a wealth of information about the more than 125 tree species growing along streets and in the parks, preserves, refuges, and botanical gardens of the five boroughs and adjacent suburban counties. Unlike many older tree guides, which because of technical limitations had to separate the plates from the text, this modern guide contains color photos of the entire tree, its bark, its leaf and its fruit together in two-page sets. The book also contains several maps to guide you through specific sites that are rich with a diversity of tree species as well as a map of the entire region, which indicates where these sites are. Even the index and bibliography are easy to use, listing both common and scientific names and providing the reader with a variety of additional sources.

Barnard is a New Yorker who has edited dozens of illustrated books on natural history during a career in publishing and photography spanning over 40 years. You can get this book in the Parks Store, which is located in the Arsenal basement, or at your local bookstore, but if you want to meet the author, find out what it took to write this great guide, and see its wonderful pictures on a large screen, you should make sure to attend this month's lecture.

Wednesday, October 23, in the Arsenal Gallery at 1:00 p.m.

Please call 212-360-8240 or e-mail Library@parks.nyc.gov to reserve your seat.



LIBRARIAN ON ONE-MONTH LOAN

If you visited the Parks Library anytime from August 12 through September 13, you would have found that one item of particular importance was checked out: the librarian. During that period the Parks Librarian filled a temporary position in another City agency. We apologize for any inconvenience you might have experienced during that time, perhaps the most notable being that there was no September *Library Branch* or library event.

During the "loan" period, several Arsenal staff members worked to keep the library opened as much as possible. There is however a chance you came in and found only a closed door. Well fear not, once again our doors are open, Monday through Friday 9:00 to 5:00. Please come by and have a look around. We continue to organize our materials for faster, easier retrieval, and continue to seek donations of books related to New York City parks. We would especially like to thank those of you who left book donations even in the absence of the librarian. Your contributions have been added to the collection and are much appreciated.

Please keep the Parks Library in mind. Perhaps while taking a walk through Central Park this autumn you'll come upon a leaf you cannot identify. Just walk it down to the Parks Library and we'll help you determine its species. Or perhaps you recently saw the renovated Union Square Park and were taken by the newly re-installed statue of Mohandas Gandhi and want to know more about it or its sculptor. Any question, any park, just come on in and we'll help you find the answers.

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

Adrian Benepe, Commissioner

THIS MONTH IN PARKS

Now in its eighth month, this column highlights notable events in parks history that occurred any number of years ago during the current month.

1820 October 6: Andrew Haswell Green’s birthday. Perhaps the most important forgotten person in New York City history, Green left his native Massachusetts and moved here in 1835. He was admitted to the bar in 1844 and practiced law with his mentor Samuel Tilden.

From 1857 to 1871 Green served on Central Park’s Board of Commissioners, filling the roles of president and comptroller. This tenure overlapped with his six years on the Board of Education (three as president); and in 1871 he was appointed New York City Comptroller. During the Central Park design competition, it was Green who saw the brilliance of Olmsted and Vaux’s Greensward Plan, and fought for it to win. Green did have his disagreements with the design duo, but without his support Central Park would not have been as true to the original design.

Green also played an important role in the formation of the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Natural History, the Central Park Menagerie (Zoo), the New York Public Library, and finally, The City of New York. That’s right: way back in 1868 Green recommended that the many unincorporated areas and municipalities of southern Westchester (the Bronx), Kings (Brooklyn), Queens, and Richmond (Staten Island) counties be consolidated with Manhattan to form the five boroughs that, since January 1, 1898, have been known as New York City.

1872 October 23: Lower floor of the Arsenal prepared to become American Museum of Natural History. Not only did Andrew H. Green work to establish the museum, but he let the museum set up shop in Central Park’s administrative building. From 1869 to 1877, the museum was located in the Arsenal after which time they moved to their current location on Central Park West.

1903 October 24: Seward Park, the first permanent municipal playground in America, opened. Thanks to Lillian D. Wald and Charles B. Stover who founded the Outdoor Recreation League (ORL) to promote organized games in public playgrounds as an alternative to play in city streets, between 1898 and 1902 nine privately sponsored playgrounds opened on municipal parkland. Soon after, the City of New York assumed operations of ORL playgrounds. The facility at Seward Park became the first permanent, municipally built playground in the United States. With its cinder surfacing, fences, recreation pavilion, and play and gymnastic equipment, the facility became a model for playground programming and design. (Note on Oct. 25, 1962, 59 years and one a day later, Parks began testing rubberized mats –“Safety Surfacing”– in Playgrounds to minimize injuries.)

1923 October 10: Parks gives Museum of the City of New York lease on Gracie Mansion. Incorporated in July of that year, the fledging institution housed both its offices and exhibition space in the mansion. A 1926 show (presented off-site) resulted in a popularity surge that forced the museum to build its present facility. They moved out of the mansion in 1932, at which time the house was renovated. (It did not become the official residence of the Mayor until 1942, avoiding by 10 years the appearance that the museum was ousted to benefit the Mayor.)

1939 October 13: 800 people apply for 30 jobs as climber-and-pruners. Just a sign of the times, even in an age when the Robert Moses’s Parks Department employed a staff of 80,000, hundreds had to be turned away.

1965 October 8: Mayoral candidate John V. Lindsay issued the “White Paper” on reforming park and recreational facilities. Drafted by Thomas P. F. Hoving (who would become Lindsay’s Parks Commissioner) the plan fired the imagination of urban planners across the country. He called for a radical departure from the traditional concept of large, centrally located urban parks to creating open space and green areas as small as one building lot: 100 feet by 20 feet. This revolutionized the way Parks thought about parks, and today we have hundreds of small properties that couldn’t accommodate a basketball court or play equipment, but do provide the public a place to sit, enjoy a tree or two, and watch the world go by.