The Changes in American Society from the 17th to 20th Century Reflected in the
Language of City Planning Documents

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the

English

Program

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

August, 2014

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Language of City Planning Documents

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Abstract

The study of the documents involved in the planning of these American cities allows for an understanding of the methodology behind the design. With some interpretation, it is possible to draw out of the documents the kinds of things Americans expected from their city. While urban planning was not a field of study until the 20th century, a great deal of planning went into many cities. This was especially true for American cities. As with anything, certain things change with time and changes can be evidenced from the design plans over the centuries in the United States. A great deal of the society's wants and needs are embedded in these city plans as the designers of the city kept a keen eye on those requirements. With this consideration in mind, it is possible conjure an image of what each city's citizens were like through the writings.

This thesis focuses on the cities of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Savannah, Georgia, Cleveland, Ohio, and Chicago, Illinois, each representative of a different time in American history to allow for the similarities and differences of American society to be illuminated. The goal is to identify these societal changes over the 300 years that spanned the founding of Philadelphia to the redesign of Chicago through the plans for the cities themselves.

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Introduction

Although urban planning as a professional field did not come into existence until the turn of the 20th century, with the rebuilding of Chicago, a great number of early American cities were the products of city planning, designed with specific ideas in mind about the society that was imagined to reside there. When traveling to various cities across the United States, some appear to be much better laid out compared to others. This is a particularly clear delineation when comparing old to new cities. Within the last one hundred years, with the inception of urban planning as a field, most cities are built with a keen eye towards practicality, ease of navigation, and beautification in mind. This was not always the norm, though, as for the first three hundred or so years of the colonization in America some cities were built haphazardly while others put in an honest effort to design them to best suit their populations.

The goal of this thesis is to examine the language used in city planning from the colonial era, up through the early part of the 20th century. The point of looking at cities across the span of four centuries is to not only note the changes based on geographical locations, but on the societal needs that developed while the United States continued to grow, evidenced in the writing. The best way to achieve this is by clearly defining the societal needs of the citizens, such as land, economical considerations, civic buildings, but also beyond that by examining how city design depended on the geography in which the city was situated. As the men charged with the tasks of designing these cities wrote their plans, their writing serves as a view of what America was at the time. Hidden within

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their design plans are the kinds of things Americans expected to have in the confines of their city, and thus these narratives contained the information to define American society and her needs.

For this reason, the cities of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Savannah, Georgia; Cleveland, Ohio; and Chicago, Illinois exemplified excellent choices. Philadelphia is the earliest of the cities, founded in 1682. It harbored one of the first major ports in the Mid-Atlantic region for the then American colonies. Its founding was closely followed by Savannah, which was founded in 1733 and became a major port city in the South, with access to the Atlantic Ocean. Cleveland serves as the final representative of the cities designed with foundational plans. Founded in 1796 as another port city, Cleveland was located inland, with access to Lake Erie and the other Great Lakes. The final city, Chicago, represents several intriguing aspects as it serves as the first official creation of what is now known as urban planning in 1909. Moreover, the city, like Cleveland, is a Midwestern city with access to the Great Lakes, keeping with the theme of cities with access to major waterways, a factor of huge importance in early America. Perhaps the most important part of it is that the 1909 design of Chicago was a rebuild after the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. Therefore, unlike the previous three cities, the analysis of Chicago will be looking at the adaptation of the city for a modern society through the new field of urban planning.

By taking in-depth looks at the plans over the span of four centuries for these cities, we can see exactly what aspects of the city, such as availability of land, easy access to waterways, and an overall healthy environment, were important to Americans. With Philadelphia, a large part of its construction rationalized the importance of a

beautiful and logical design layout, as well as freedom, coupled with an importance paid to economics. In Savannah, we see a different tilt, although again, there is an emphasis on appearance and with availability of spacious land, the colonial city took economic viability to a much higher level. In Cleveland, an example of one of the first truly American cities as it was one of the first built under a sovereign United States, we see a city founded in the frontier where economic viability took a front seat, especially with its key access point to water, which at the time stood as the most efficient mode of transportation. Finally, Chicago as a new age city was the first example of a modern city, taking into account both the economy and appearance to the highest degree, to make it the most beautiful city according to human ability.

The questions that come to mind preceding the examination of these four major cities over roughly four centuries of American history are what kind of common societal themes are carried throughout time that become the embodiment of America, what major societal changes can be seen over the years, and how each city design stood the test of time. There are certain things expected to be carried throughout each city as a common theme, one being economics, for that is a necessity, but there are certain trends in city design that almost certainly changed over the course of time. With the help of primary and secondary sources relating to each city's design processes and its effects, pieces of rhetorical analysis are used to guide the narrative and ultimately produce an image of what American society was like during the construction of each city.

Chapter 1: Philadelphia: The City in the Most Convenient Place

Charles II granted William Penn a charter for the colony of Pennsylvania in 1681 as a repayment the crown owed to Penn's father. The grant allocated 45,000 acres on the Delaware River for the colony. Penn was careful to make sure everyone knew Charles had named the colony in honor of his father, Sir William Penn, for Penn wanted no trouble with detractors thinking he was trying to immortalize himself.[1] In actuality, Penn's modesty went so far that he offered the Under Secretary twenty guineas to change the name to New Wales "for I feared lest it should be looked on as a vanity in me."[2] Once Penn had secured the land grant from the king that established the borders of the colony and orchestrated a purchase of land from the Delaware Indians, he ventured to secure purchasers for the land and investors in his colony.

Historical Background

Penn wanted colonists so badly to commit to his new land that he used his very best rhetoric and forms of persuasion. He said, "the place lies six hundred miles nearer the sun than England."[3] Not only did he play the latitudinal difference to his advantage, albeit falsely, but he further ventured to sell the colony on any other valuable features it held, like easy access to waterways, availability of wildlife, availability of products and commodities, profitability, and of course, perhaps most important of all, more land and considerably more freedom.[4] Penn's use of this persuasive rhetoric illuminating these key features of the colony for hopeful purchasers exposes just what was considered valuable

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[1] Susan E. Klepp, "Encounter and Experiment: The Colonial Period," in *Pennsylvania: A History of the Commonwealth*, ed. Randall M. Miller and William Pencak (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 64.

[2] J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609-1884*, vol. 1, (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co, 1884), 83.

[3] Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 84.

[4] Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 85.

to these people. Although it cannot necessarily be held to a higher standard than the other

reasons, much can be said for freedom being the highest selling point for Pennsylvania.

This was mostly because many of the early colonists were of the Quaker belief. Much of

the Quakers' contention with the English monarchy was its continual growth of power

and its involvement in every aspect of English life. The Quakers were heavily persecuted

in England because of their faith, including Penn, who spent eight months in the Tower

of London for his devout Quakerism. Thus, the opportunity to live in a land of freedom

appealed to them the most.[5] What is most fascinating about Penn's appeal for colonists,

although perhaps not so surprising when considering he seemed to plan every little detail,

were the type of people he wanted to settle his colony. Penn has three specific types of

people he wanted for Pennsylvania: those who will buy, those who will rent, and

servants.[6] Unexpectedly though, because of Penn's persuasive appeals, the majority of

colonists to invest were not the gentry he hoped for but tradesmen, artisans, and laborers

who arrived as the early settlers of Philadelphia.[7] This shows the lure of land was not

something that necessarily appealed to landed gentlemen but members of the middle class

from the city to whom space was a foreign concept.

Later that year, after securing several investors and appointing members to

oversee the colony with him, he established a set of conditions for the first purchasers of

the colonial land. The land Penn acquired for Pennsylvania had settlements that traced

back to 1619 through the Dutch and Swedes but less than 2000 people could be found

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[5] *The Papers of William Penn*, ed. Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn, vol. 2, 1680-1684 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 76.

[6] Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 85.

[7] William E. Lingelbach, "William Penn and City Planning." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 1944, 402.

still living there upon his purchase.[8] Penn made sure that people saw his Pennsylvania as a uniquely different colony. The colony was not expressly devised for monetary reasons like other British colonies, but more so for a personal reason, a colony of freedom. As a member of the Quaker faith, Penn had dealt with his fair share of discrimination in England, and so he saw this colonial grant as an opportunity. The charter was a unique one; while it still placed the colony under the umbrella of British rule and therefore subject to obedience to the crown, Penn was essentially the sovereign of the colony for all purposes. Penn's first pronouncement about the land he acquired stated, "a tract of land shall be survey'd; say fifty thousand acres to a hundred adventures, in which some of the best shall be set out for towns or cities…"[9] From the very beginning he clearly had grand plans for his new world colony. Penn used his background as a landed gentleman and a Quaker as his inspirations for colonial development. Penn's city of brotherly love was meant to be vastly different from any other European predecessor.[10] Although he drew ideas from a myriad of venues, evidence clearly ties inspirations from Ireland, which may have posed the decisive inspiration for these grand plans.[11] In fact, a similar set of dimensions for the streets and plots used in Philadelphia resembled those used in the rebuilding of London after The Great Fire of 1666.[12]

Soon after making opening declarations for his colony in general, Penn made first mention of his plans for the first major city of his colony, which would soon become Philadelphia. "That so soone as it pleaseth God that the abovesaid persons Arrive there, a

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[8] Edwin B. Bronner, *William Penn's "Holy Experiment": The Founding of Pennsylvania 1681-1701*(New York: Temple University Publications, 1962), 21.

[9] Mary Maples Dunn and Richard S. Dunn, "The Founding: 1681-1701," in *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, ed. Russell F. Weigley (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 1.

[10] Dunn, "The Founding", 2.

[11] Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 88.

[12] John W. Reps, "William Penn and the Planning of Philadelphia." *The Town Planning Review*, 1956, 32.

certain Quantity of Land or Ground platt shall be laid out for a large Towne or Citty in the most Covenient place upon the River for health & Navigation."[13] In the very beginning, Penn's plans for the city are evident as he clearly laid them out in declarative statements like the one above.

Three things very quickly come to the forefront from this excerpt as important to early colonial Americans: a healthy lifestyle, easy access to waterways, and faith. He wanted to situate the city in the best possible placement for the best health of its citizens and the most practical location for shipping. His invocation of God for safe travels to his colony affirms just how religious these people were, which makes sense when considering Penn and a majority of his early colonists belonged to the Quaker faith. Penn had plans to address the first two primarily with the foundation of his new city, and the third of course is the fundamental reason for the creation of the colony, as a safe haven for all religions, not just his beloved Quakers.

Design Plans

Penn's grand plan for his great city featured ten thousand acres divided into one hundred lots of one hundred acres, with center gardens, and clear right angle streets for his "green country town" but of course, this was his utopian image, and he soon realized the unrealistic belief in this design. This did not stop him from still planning his perfect city the best way the land would allow and there were certain aspects of it he was sure would work out.

He very clearly explained every aspect of this city in his plans from the landscape design to the actual placement of important city buildings.

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[13] *Papers of William Penn*, ed. Dunn, vol. 2. 98.

Be sure to settle the figure of the Towne so as that the Streets hereafter may be uniforme downe to the Water from the Country bounds, let the place for the Store be on the middle of the Key, which will yet serve for Market and State houses too. This may be ordered when I come, only let the Houses built be in a line, or upon a line as much as may be. Pitch upon the very middle of the Platt where the Towne or line of Houses is to be laid or run facing the Harbour and great River for the Situation of my house, and let it be not the tenth part of the Towne.[14]

These are the directions given by Penn to his commissioners for the beginning construction of Philadelphia. Penn's humility, which has been mentioned several times before, is evidenced in his design. While his designs for the city are not an easy task in the frontier land set aside for it, they do follow a beautiful simplicity that reflects the type of people set to arrive there. The total size requested for said city was 10,000 acres along the Delaware River; Penn left the decision of the location to his commissioners. The commissioners were his hand-selected representatives in the colony while Penn tidied up things in England. It is unique that Penn was so very particular in the design of the city itself but when it came to its placement, he left a little more decision room for his advisors. This is of course partly because Penn was not there to survey the land but also he felt confident in the decision making of his commissioners to leave the site up to them.

Establishing a spot for Philadelphia was the number one priority on Penn's list and he gave direct instructions that all other decisions were to be postponed until a site was picked. His representatives were given orders to treat any residents who might reside on the land in question proper compensation. He specified whether Europeans or Natives that they be given either money or land for their removal, and to be fair in their judgments. When it came to the actual laying out of the city, they were given instructions to lay out the streets in a rectangular way, to preserve a broad waterfront, and reserve a central square of three hundred acres for the government. For all other decisions, he

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[14] *Papers of William Penn,* ed. Dunn, vol. 2, 120.

relied on their discretion.[15] Originally, Pennsbury, a village just a few miles upriver on

the Delaware River where Penn actually built his colonial home, was targeted as the site

for Philadelphia but in part due to the many Swedes already residing there, its close

proximity to the unsettled boundary to Maryland, and its shallow water, it was rejected.

Instead, Coquannock, an area located just between the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers,

seemed to fit the bill of every marker sought in the land, save for its narrowness at the

peninsula that would handicap the size of the city.[16] The area known as Coaquannock, or

"grove of pines" by the Lenape Indians was the land they settled upon, under an elm tree

immortalized in a painting that has often been cited showing Penn's legendary penchant

for friendship.[17] It would take some negotiation on the side of Penn with several of the

previous tenants to acquire enough waterfront property for his future city but before long,

he acquired the perfect swathe of land. The land overall was a very well watered area

with plenty of woods but also featured a nearby partially hidden cove for shipping, and a

sandy beach for smaller ships to land, all making it the ideal plot for a commercial

center.[18]

Penn's plans at first glance follow the grid pattern for city design, a very

traditional style of planning carried over from his English roots, but it is at a closer look

at the dimensions that his deviations become clear. The grid pattern had been used as far

back as the Romans but its most recent incarnation in the redesign of London after the

Great Fire of 1666 is what served as Penn's inspiration.[19] The plans for Philadelphia were

[15] Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 89.
[16] Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 97.
[17] Dunn, "The Founding", 4.
[18] Hannah Benner Roach, "The Planting of Philadelphia: A Seventeenth-Century Real Estate Development." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 1968, 24.
[19] Reps, "William Penn and the Planning of Philadelphia.",40.

unconventional compared to most others as he shied away from the nucleated town and opted for long plots of land spread out along the river. He appropriated the grid pattern and elongated it to allow for confines that are more spacious. His directions made sure that all shareholders received riverfront property to facilitate growth.[20] It would be in a following letter when Penn assigned the name of his grand city, "I doe Call the Citty to be layd out by the Name of Philadelphia and soe I will have it Called Given under my hand and Seal 28. 8:mo. 1681 at London.[21] The name Philadelphia aptly fitted Penn's colonial capital city as it translates to "the city of brotherly love" and as a Quaker establishment with their universal acceptance of all people, the name makes perfect sense. Even with all these grand plans Penn had for his city he was only able to appropriate 1200 acres for Philadelphia and it was with this land that Surveyor-General Thomas Holme went to work on his famous grid plan.

The dimensions of the town had it stretching two miles from east to west in between the two rivers and one mile from north to south. Even with the much-limited land available, Philadelphia still stood to be the largest town, geographically, in 17th century America.[22] Beyond the city limits to the north, holding true to his belief in turning this city into one with a country-like atmosphere, Penn set aside 8000 acres around the city for farmland.[23] Before ground could be broken to lay out any plots of land for the fledgling colonial city, Penn made sure that a road system received attention first. When he issued the conditions for the colonial settlement, Penn laid out a methodical plan for roads,

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[20] *Papers of William Penn,* ed. Dunn, vol. 2, 98.
[21] *Papers of William Penn,* ed. Dunn, vol. 2, 129.
[22] *Papers of William Penn,* ed. Dunn, vol. 2, 359.
[23] Dunn, "The Founding", 7.

The surveyors shall consider what roads or highways will be necessary to the cities, towns, or through the lands. Great roads from city to city not to contain less than forty feet in breadth, shall be first laid out and declared to be for highways, before the dividend of acres be laid out for the purchaser, and the like observation to be had for the streets in the towns and cities, that there may be convenient roads and streets preserved.[24]
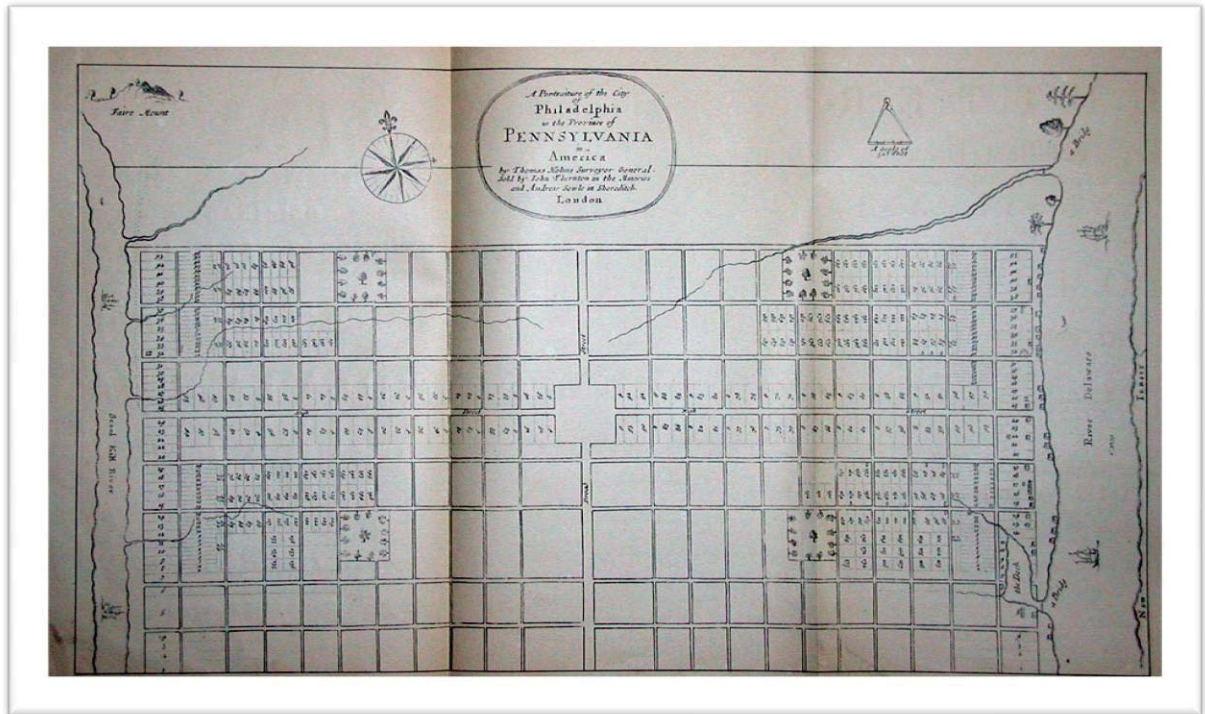

Figure 1: Thomas Holme's 1681 Grid Drawing of Philadelphia (Courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania)

Most importantly of all, Penn made sure to assure residents that the construction of the roads would not make claims on public land.[25] Penn's language demonstrates just how ideal he wanted his colonial city to appear when he referenced the construction of "great roads" throughout connecting the cities and towns. It is evident from this that he had grand plans far beyond just Philadelphia but that this city was the flagship of it all. As discussed earlier, Penn was a relatively humble man and that as well emanates in his

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[24] Reps, "William Penn and the Planning of Philadelphia", 34.

[25] John W. Reps, *Town Planning in Frontier America* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1980), 147.

writing. As the owner of the colony all decisions were his to make when giving directions on the road system. Even with that in mind, he used the word "consider" in his directions, thereby allowing his surveyors to make their own expert opinions in construction but still holding true to Penn's vision.

Penn, working alongside Holme, very carefully drafted a plan for the ideal city making sure that the cornerstones for the colony that he outlined previously were adhered to in its creation. One of those key ideals was making sure Philadelphia was a green town, as Penn had so often proclaimed. He made that very clear in directions like this, "That in Clearing the Ground, Care be Taken to Leave One Acree of Trees for every five Acres Cleared, especially to Preserve Oak & Mulberries for Silk & Shipping."[26] With these clear landscape specifications, Penn clearly took into account two of his major goals in the foundation of the city. This policy serves his goals two-fold, in that preserving the greenery maintains not only an aesthetically pleasing view but promotes health and better environmental conditions as well. However, in the process, it also serves economical reasons, regarding the oak and mulberry trees, as they can provide various routes for income.

Penn's plans did not stop at organizing the landscape arrangement of the city's plots. Further examples exist showing Penn's quest for the beautification of his colonial city. Penn showed a penchant for thinking of dynamic ways to design his city, a rather new city building policy compared to the route used in Europe for so long.

> Gett the Court yards pales & gates like Philadelphia, in the places I have appointed before, behind & on each side the house, more then which need not be, save one against the gate that goes cross the water side court into the garden. Lett

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[26] *Papers of William Penn,* ed. Dunn, vol. 2, 100.

the land in the water court be levied, & steps be made of brick covered with stone, or stone such as by water side, covered with quary stone.[27]

This is an instance of Penn taking ultimate creative control of his city, but beyond that, it shows just how much he cares for the landscape and overall depiction of Philadelphia. His focus on the importance of these landscape visuals shows the value these early Americans invested in not only the use of space but also the overall visual appearance. The colonists of early Philadelphia came from all over England, so some came accustomed to open spaces with greenery, while others came from the cities and thus open spaces were something new. Either way with the promise of a new city in America, they all expected spacious plots of land and that is what Penn intended to deliver. The extreme attention to detail paid by Penn to the landscape of Philadelphia is really a unique process, but it proves just how ideal a place he planned it to be. Evidenced in the excerpt above, Penn hoped for the land plots to be uniform in outward appearance so that from the outside the city looked like a model city. What is remarkable about the rhetoric exemplified in the excerpt is the way Penn took time to explain the layout down to the minor details of where to place the gates and what material to use for steps. For one man to take such a vested interest in every detail proves the creation of Philadelphia was a labor of love.

Penn's original plans for the Philadelphia plots situated them lying roughly 600 feet from the riverbank and about 800 feet wide. Unfortunately, the land was not best suited for his dimensions but along with the help of Holme, they allocated the plots the best the topography would allow. What did work out were his concepts of uniform streets, evenly placed houses, and surrounding greenery. While Penn's Philadelphia may

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[27] *Papers of William Penn,* ed. Dunn, vol. 2, 584.

not have appeared the most majestic city, the spacious overlay allowed more space than

any other early American city and allowed for exponential future growth.[28] This outlook

was one unique to colonial American cities, as previous cities were most often designed

with just the present in mind, whereas Philadelphia, while not spectacular in any sense of

the word, had promise to keep a neat and orderly expansion for years after its foundation.

Early on, the plots were distributed through a lottery system for the mile of land

along the river between the only current streets, South and Vine Streets. The result was a

cramped site for the early residents and so Penn sought to expand along the Schuylkill.

While this left Philadelphia with a 1200-acre rectangle, unfortunately it also left the city

with a harder access point being roughly 100 miles up a challenging river and a high

riverbank. Luckily, the Delaware River provided a quick route into the interior and a cove

called Dock Creek provided plenty of docking space.[29]

As mentioned previously, Thomas Holme, a fellow Quaker who hailed from

Ireland, took up the task of being the surveyor general of Pennsylvania and, with that

task, he was the man in charge of helping William Penn craft his beloved plans for

Philadelphia. Holme "set down a tentative plat for the beginning of the city, neater than

the tract purchased actually was, with four streets: Second Street, Broad Street, Fourth

Street, and Dock Street. These were marked off into fifty-four numbered lots each."[30]

Alas, for Holme the task was not nearly as simple as his original plat may have depicted.

Working with what was basically virgin territory to lay out the city, Holme had to depend

on what he knew from theory and practice. In Holme's surviving map of the foundation

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[28] Dunn, "The Founding", 7.
[29] Dunn, "The Founding", 5.
[30] Irma Corcoran, *Thomas Holme 1624-1695: Surveyor General of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1992), 107.

of Philadelphia the "basic platform is given a grid pattern by three streets running from the Delaware to the Schuylkill parallel with and north of High Street, and four similarly placed streets to the south, crossed by eleven streets on either side of and parallel to Broad Street."[31] (See Figure 1) Penn being the logical man that he was, created a simple coding for the street system of Philadelphia; all roads that ran north and south were numbered, starting with Front Street; meanwhile those running east and west were named after forest trees.[32]

Along with these grids, Holme provided a series of four small squares for public use and one large square, as requested by Penn, as the center of government. In the early construction days of the city though, the public squares were left to later plans, as no detailed descriptions were provided in the early days. The only instructions Penn left in the original document in the construction of the city were where he discussed the storehouse to be, "on the middle of the key, which will yet serve for market and statehouse, too."[33] The plan devised by Holme for Philadelphia was a considerably well-done surveying job, as he was able to take the unorthodox land and superimpose Penn's desired structure upon it while still obeying nature's natural boundaries.

Once a grid was agreed upon for the foundation of Philadelphia, Penn went to work establishing rules for his colonial city so it would reach its fullest potential. As stated previously, Penn had to use a great deal of persuasion to sell the plots of land in Philadelphia and while his rhetoric was effective, specifically in its offer of freedom, guidelines had to be drawn. Transplanting to this new colony promised many things, most important of which was opportunity for more land and freedom. Penn made sure to

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[31] Corcoran, *Holme*, 117.
[32] Lingelbach, "William Penn and City Planning", 405.
[33] Roach, "The Planting of Philadelphia", 20.

stipulate certain rules even in his colonial haven of freedom. None of these rules were

overreaching by any means, once again showing Penn's belief in trusting people and

working compromises. The rules included: colonists had three years to establish a

presence on their land; all business must be performed in the public market (this included

dealings with the Native Americans); any stock not claimed in three months became

property of the governor; and, perhaps most important of all in his quest for greenery,

one-fifth of all land must remain wooded, with special attention being paid to allow all

oak and mulberry trees to stand.[34] Penn's insistence on preservation of greenery alludes

to his position of being a humanist and therefore valuing the health of his population,

which greenery most certainly served to benefit.

Penn's concern for making Philadelphia the ideal modern American city went

along with his plans for aiming to create Pennsylvania, as a whole, the ideal American

colony. In 1698, just 17 years after the founding of Philadelphia, Gabriel Thomas, a

friend of William Penn and one of the original Quakers to come over during the

foundation of the colony, published an account of the whereabouts of Penn's fine city.

"Inhabitants have built a Noble and Beautiful City, and called it Philadelphia, which

contains above two thousand Houses, all Inhabited; and most of them Stately, and of

Brick, generally three Stories high, after the Mode in London, and as many several

Families in each."[35] It is unique to note that the houses built in the early foundational

days of the city were constructed in haste using the Swedish fashion. The Swedes who

had colonized sparingly decades before in the area had seemingly perfected the model for

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[34] Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, 89.

[35] Gabriel Thomas, *A Historical and Geographical Account of the Province and Country of Pensilvania; And Of West-New-Jersey in America* (London: A. Baldwin, 1698), 5.

basic foundational structure.[36] It made sense to the early colonists to adopt this

construction method to build their starter homes. Early homes were built in the Swedish

style by notching wood but eventually civilians returned to native wood and brick

construction and soon even a brick manufacturer was created. The city of course in the

early going exhibited the signs of a frontier community, aided by the fact that many of

the first homes were built of the log variety.[37] With Thomas' observations in mind, it is

fascinating to imagine how industrious the early Philadelphians were in being able to

erect this frontier town and turn it into a model city in a time frame just short of two

decades.

Thomas brilliantly outlined the makeup of the city, even down to its street

makeup, discussing the intersecting alleys, lanes, streets, squares and courts. Thomas'

observations very clearly show that Penn's organizational ideas for the city were well

thought out and perhaps even brilliant, at least in Thomas' mind. The main streets were

100 feet wide, larger than any in London. Thomas made sure to make a special note of

the commercial center composed of warehouses, a market, and statehouse, all

encompassed in Penn's central square. The space appropriated for this central square was

ten acres. Interestingly enough, Thomas observed that despite the availability of a wide

riverfront, the city faced inward to the central plaza.[38] This may have been Penn's subtle

way to remind the cities' inhabitants of the government's location.

Perhaps, one observation Thomas made is the most important of all and that is its

success as a port city. The geographical location setting up Philadelphia as a major port

city in the colonies clearly was one that truly paid off as "ships of Two or Three Hundred

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[36] Corcoran, *Holme*, 111.
[37] Dunn, "The Founding", 11.
[38] Dunn, "The Founding", 8.

Tuns may come up to this City, by either of these two Rivers."[39] The locality worked as Philadelphia very quickly became the third-largest port on the Atlantic coast after Boston and New York.[40]

It is interesting to note, according to Thomas' account, the identical appearance of the houses of Philadelphia to those of London, along with the other comparisons it received. It is a testament to the society's ingenuity that the city was established to be far different from any other city, but at the same time, the settlers maintained a sense of their identity in the new format. This shows just how attached to their British identity the citizens of Philadelphia were. Even if they did leave their home country on account of religious freedom, they still held that common identity. Furthermore, even though we see a newly devised grid plan for Philadelphia, the inhabitants in most cases stuck to what practices they already knew as part of British society, and this best shows itself in their housing construction. This idea in the end shows that early colonial Americans, at least in most cases, very much carried over their "Britishness" across the Atlantic.

Yet there is another carryover design pattern that further solidified the colonial cities' connection with its English roots, as a public commons was very much an idea from England, as was a central location for the governing body. Although not found in as great abundance as Penn planned in Philadelphia, the idea certainly was an old world transfer. Alas, issues arose with the development of Philadelphia as the city expanded, leaving the commons in jeopardy. As settlers poured in, plans were made for seven east-west streets needing to be plotted and twenty-three intersecting streets, with more

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[39] Thomas, *Historical and Geographical Account*, 6.
[40] Dunn, "The Founding", 2.

attention being paid to the side nearest the Delaware River for its faster development.[41] It became very clear just how important the body of water was to this fledgling city when a majority of settlers picked their land to sit along the Delaware River, necessitating the city's grid design be expanded for that section of the city first.

The rivers, of course, played the important role in being necessary and paramount for colonial industry but also played a very aesthetic role as well in the colony. While colonists planned to plot their houses along the river as much as they could, William Penn also greatly urged the growth to expand that way as well.[42] When the first distributions of property came about, it appeared appropriate for those purchasers present at the time of their allotment to receive property along the Delaware. Meanwhile for those who were absentee at the time received a plot along the Schuylkill, where a vacant lot would be less noticeable.[43] Once again, this shows the importance Penn paid to aesthetics in creating his frontier city. Penn rationalized that those purchasers who arrived early and worked the brunt of the labor, turning the frontier into a city, deserved the developed land, while those who arrived later should have to work to do the same for theirs.[44] For one, it gave the colony a beautiful display, but secondly having rows of houses line the Delaware River gave the appearance of perhaps a much larger and more heavily populated city than what actually resided there, making it overall appear more appealing and successful.

The original layout saw 530 acre and half acre lots created and even the smallest, "hath room for House, Garden and small Orchard, to great Content and Satisfaction of all

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[41]Corcoran, *Holme*, 125.

[42] Corcoran, *Holme*, 128.

[43] Roach, "The Planting of Philadelphia", 30.

[44] Roach, "The Planting of Philadelphia", 37.

here concerned," according to Holme.[45] This seemed the perfect offering for the newly arrived colonists and it most definitely was. The simplicity of the Quakers was a well-known feature, allowing for these simple plans. Their simplicity became clearly evident in their public building construction, as the largest building in early Philadelphia was the Great Meeting House, at fifty square feet. Otherwise, the city was littered with three brewhouses, half a dozen or more taverns, markets, and several shipyards.[46] Nothing fancy sprung up in early Philadelphia; all that was necessary was there and in the most practical way possible.

  Unfortunately, with time, Penn's design went out of control when many of the plots were cut through with alleys to allow for more housing close to the Delaware, as the Schuylkill remained underdeveloped for a good portion of its banks. The central area for the government even had to come down due to overcrowding.[47] Some would describe Penn's iconic Philadelphia plan as a shortsighted project that did not consider future needs.[48] In the end, the city bore little resemblance to the "green country town" Penn had wanted it to be, but his influence can be seen everywhere and much of the progress of that city was done through his volition, which warrants William Penn's remembrance in the city.[49]

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[45] Dunn, "The Founding", 11.
[46] Dunn, "The Founding", 13.
[47] Dunn, "The Founding", 17.
[48] Thomas R. Winpenny, "The Nefarious Philadelphia Plan and Urban America: A Reconsideration." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 1977, 104.
[49] Dunn, "The Founding", 32.

Conclusion

By 1683, the colony reported a population of 4,000, Philadelphia had grown to 150 houses, and some 400 farmers resided in the country.[50] From there on the city saw exponential growth and much of the original plans of Penn and Holme were changed, but the same ideals can be found. The early American colonists that arrived in Philadelphia came with two clear goals in mind: to escape the overcrowding of the city and the overgrowth of the government's power in England. Penn's colonial city provided both these avenues in a very grand way and many others in the process. Penn showed a penchant for understanding a people and then delivering said needs onto the people to the best of his ability. The language that helped create Philadelphia evidenced exactly that, as it was always written of as a modest town with the greatest ambition to be a "holy experiment". One of the greatest lasting effects Philadelphia had on future cities in America was the adoption of the public square.[51] As Penn's vision of urban greenery was one that much of America valued.

The rhetoric displayed in the planning of Philadelphia clearly carries two themes that are persistent throughout the writings. The planners of the city clearly made it of the utmost importance to focus on two things: one that the city grid was designed to be spacious and practical and two that the city carried an aesthetically pleasing image. These themes of design were very much a carryover from England, although the spacious aspect was something not available in the home country. The language of the plan was kept simple and carried a very reverent tone. What the documents reveal about the people that were set to reside in Philadelphia was that they had a clear methodology and clarity in

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[50] Bronner, *"Holy Experiment"*, 32.
[51] Reps, "William Penn and the Planning of Philadelphia", 34.

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their plans. These characteristics would explain the very descriptive and detailed instructions for the city from the grid layout to actual building construction. One other very clear definition of the society was their desire for a plethora of land, but beyond that their want of land with a view. It was with those key considerations in mind that careful precautions were made during the surveying to provide the large tracts of land but in so doing keeping aesthetics in mind as well.

In Chapter 2, we fast-forward to the mid 18th century and a new kind of colonial city with new goals. Savannah, Georgia, founded by General James Oglethorpe in 1733. The Oglethorpe Plan, as it came to be known, shared one thing in common with Penn's Philadelphia, a belief in open spaces for aesthetics. However, there is where the comparisons end, as Oglethorpe developed Savannah with a military eye for uniformity and productivity as an economically viable city. Savannah was not sold as a haven away from England but just as another chance for England to take full economic advantage of her colonial holdings in America, specifically with another port city further south.

Chapter 2: Savannah: The Utopian City

Savannah's founding was unique as far as the American colonies were concerned. As the foundational city in the last of the American colonies, it had plenty of previous colonization experiments in North America to analyze for guidelines. It presents a great counter to Philadelphia, which was one of the first cities founded in America in the latter half of the 17th century. Savannah was founded in 1733 with twelve other American colonies already well established with healthy cities; the infrastructure was there for the founders of Savannah to create a premiere city. Both cities stand out in the American colonial landscape for their adept planning exhibited by their founders but the otherwise the similarities end from there. A key difference between the two lies with the creators. James Oglethorpe, while a great deal of the layout of the city was credited to him, was not the sole brain behind Savannah's construction as he had a collection of men, known as trustees, to assist in the process, whereas Philadelphia was virtually the brainchild of William Penn. The cities were founded on different principles as well: Philadelphia as a place of religious freedom while Savannah was made to give the poor of England a second chance but also to establish a military presence for the safety of the American colonies.

The language of Oglethorpe's plan was altogether a different kind of rhetoric. He simplified as much as possible and very clearly outlined the plans. No doubt, a byproduct of his military upbringing using simple and concise language allowed for a quick and orderly construction of Savannah.

Historical Background

James Oglethorpe came from a military background but as a student of the Enlightenment in Europe, he found himself dabbling in social reform. He was a member of Parliament, which gave him the power and influence to bring change. It was his role as a social reformer in Parliament that led to the founding of a new colony in America. Oglethorpe was a member of a committee that sought to overhaul prisons in England. In the quest for a solution, one of the grand ideas Oglethorpe came up with was to create a debtor's colony in the southernmost part of the England's colonial holdings in America. He sought out English citizens that were dealing with financial hardships and promised them the opportunity to become successful in this colony as long as they pulled their weight. As part of his plan to give many Englishmen a second start, he envisioned a classless society. Oglethorpe was a man of the Enlightenment and therefore he made sure his colonial venture embodied those same principles. In fact, Georgia became the only colony that embodied the ideas produced out of the Enlightenment, including science, humanism, diversity, and secularism.[52]

While Oglethorpe conceived the colony as a refuge for debtors, originally, it would take more than this philanthropic idea to get the British crown to award a charter. With that in mind, Oglethorpe used the persuasion of geopolitical and mercantile value the colony could afford to England to secure the crown's support and turn it into a reality.[53] "The prospect of success is as great, and the difficulties as little as have attended the Planting any other Colonies; perhaps they are less, since Carolina (to which Georgia

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[52] Thomas D. Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan: Enlightenment Design in Savannah and Beyond* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 3.
[53] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 37.

is contiguous,) abounds with provisions."[54] Once the charter was secured and word got out of this newest colonial excursion, specifically this unique one of a humanitarian endeavor, Oglethorpe was viewed as a great philanthropist. Historian John Doyle referred to Oglethorpe's plans for his colony as the first, "systematic and organized effort" to stop poverty and lauded Oglethorpe as "as the founder of modern philanthropy."[55] It was a unique colonial enterprise but with the combined trust in Oglethorpe as a leader and with the better understanding of the land in America, it was a promising gamble.

The royal grant was unique compared to the other American colonies. The grant requested was one to establish a charitable colony, which petitioned the British crown for assistance for food and goods for many of the transplants. The intent of the colony was twofold; one, it created a military barrier to the Spanish in Florida and two, it gave resources to British citizens who normally would not have had them to increase the national wealth through farming.[56] An interesting issue to note to keep in mind with the goals of Georgia, though, is that even though the colony was established with both the humanitarian and military issues in mind, at a closer glance, most of the early construction in Savannah dealt with military aspects. While there is some sense of practicality to this, since Savannah was being placed in an area where threats originally existed from both European and Native American sources, the extent spent on fortifications in the early months perhaps qualifies as more than early preventative measures.

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[54] Benjamin Martyn, *Reasons for Establishing the Colony of Georgia, with regard to the Trade of Great Britain* (London, 1733), 26.
[55] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 44.
[56]Taylor, *Georgia Plan*, 17.

There is no doubt that when Oglethorpe made the request for the colonial grant of Georgia that he was very passionate about the humanitarian effort he could make with the colony. Though consideration should be given to Oglethorpe's military background and in doing so perhaps it played a bigger role in Savannah's establishment as colonial security clearly arose as a major issue in its design. What this observation raises is the possibility that the colonial venture of Georgia was a much more important military venture in America than narratives lead us to believe. The humanistic aspects of the establishment of Georgia may have been used as a persuasive tool with Parliament and King George II to secure the land grant and a way to build up Oglethorpe's legend as a man of reform.[57] While facts cannot be made in support of solely one or the other, it is clear that Oglethorpe, like Penn before him, shared a sense of the humanist tradition. The various rhetorical strategies used by Oglethorpe throughout his literature, mostly his utilization of pathos in cultivating Georgia as a second chance for many, in support of developing his colony evidence that he sought to conjure an ideal, safe, and healthy society.

The founding of Georgia would come at a greater cost to the English crown as opposed to other colonies because the crown provided the finances and equipment for many of the colonists to travel to the America. However, many colonists paid their own way into Georgia, giving the colony some private financial backing. Oglethorpe and his trustees made sure all the colonists who planned to make the transplant to Georgia were committed to working the land to produce a productive agrarian colony. The charter granted Oglethorpe and his trustees by King George II, was a very liberal one, similar to

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[57] Turpin C. Bannister, "Oglethorpe's Sources for the Savannah Plan." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 1961, 62.

what Penn received when he founded Pennsylvania. It awarded them control to "prepare

laws, statues, and ordinances" necessary to govern the colony as long as they were

consistent with those of England.[58] This freedom allotted to the founders of Georgia is

what allowed them to create a unique society in the southernmost part of the American

colonies.

As is customary in the charter, the land being appropriated for the colony was

outlined in the document. The land outlined for the colony of Georgia was described as

such,

> All those lands Countries and Territories Situate lying and being in that part of
> South Carolina in America which lies from the most Northern Stream of a River
> there commonly called the Savannah all along the Sea Coast to the Southward
> unto the most Southern Stream of a certain other great water or River called the
> Altamaha and Westward from the heads of the said Rivers respectively in Direct
> Lines to the South Seas and all that space Circuit and Precinct of land lying within
> the said boundaries…we do by these Presents make and Erect and Create one
> independent and separate Province by the name of Georgia.[59]

The unique part of this proclamation was there were no issues with the colonial

boundaries as seen previously in other colonial charters. This gave Oglethorpe the license

to quickly find ways to utilize all the land allotted to Georgia without any kind of

negotiations. As mentioned earlier, the language used above is clear and concise leaving

no room for argument on the property lines of the colony.

While Philadelphia was established with the sole intention of religious freedom,

Georgia had a multi-faceted set of goals with its creation. The three goals for the creation

of Georgia were discussed in the charter: the first was the philanthropic mission, the

second, strategic placement of a colony between British, French, and Spanish colonial

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[58] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 44.

[59] Louis De Vorsey, Jr., "Oglethorpe and the Earliest Maps of Georgia," in *Pennsylvania: Oglethorpe in Perspective: Georgia's Founder after Two Hundred Years*, ed. Phinizy Spalding and Harvey H. Jackson (The University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, AL, 1989), 30.

interests, and the third, increased mercantile interests.[60] What made these goals attainable

was that they each supported each other, so success in one meant success in them all.

Unlike Penn's naming of his colonial city Philadelphia in honor of representing

what kind of society he hoped to harbor there, Oglethorpe's name selection for his city

was not as meaningful. Oglethorpe's choice to name the colonial capital Savannah was

quite simply a move of practicality, and coming from a man of military background it

makes sense. With the benefit of having British colonists in America for over 100 years

before his colonial quest, Oglethorpe had knowledgeable maps to examine for the ideal

geographical location of his colony. He had several key attributes he was looking for in

the land to place his settlement and when he found what appeared to be the ideal

placement, it was up to naming the city. Since the future city was located just along the

mouth of the Savannah River, it only made sense to name the city, Savannah.[61] The

naming of the city perhaps shows a lack of creativity in Oglethorpe, but more than that, it

showed a sense of practicality, something very evident throughout Savannah's design.

Design Plans

Upon arrival on the Savannah River, Oglethorpe took the opportunity to survey

the land he had originally selected for colonization. His account of the settlement area

illuminates what aspects of the land truly warranted his utmost attention. When

Oglethorpe wrote back describing his choice for colonization,

> I fixed upon a healthy situation about ten miles from the sea…Ships that draw 12
> foot water can ride within ten yards of the Bank…Upon the River Side, in the
> centre of this plain, I have laid out the town; over against it is an island of very
> rich Land…The River is pretty wide, the water fresh, and from the key of the

[60] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 56.
[61] William Harden, *A History of Savannah And South Georgia* (Atlanta, GA: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1981), 1.

town you see its whole course to the sea…The Landscape is very agreeable, the stream being wide, and bordered with high woods on both sides.[62]

The embracing of the land by both Penn and Oglethorpe is a very different kind of view of it than seen by previous American colonists. The Puritans viewed the land as a dark and sinister place but for the founders of Philadelphia and Savannah it was an opportunity to start anew, to build a new society free of the previous issues that bogged down society.[63] Untamed nature presented a new opportunity and therefore reformers such as Penn and Oglethorpe embraced it.

His first address calls attention to the land being of a "healthy situation" showing primarily the colony's health was of the utmost importance to Oglethorpe. The health of the colony in both a financial and personnel sense were both issues he hoped to address successfully. The land selected for Savannah clearly evidenced the attributes. As part of his praise of the land's healthy attributes, he later mentions the freshness of the water. Clean water is something so valued to colonists, even though perhaps assumed in the previous address of the land's health, that it is an attribute worthy of its own mention. Key geographical issues are addressed in regards to their economic resourcefulness, as he specifically describes the depth of the Savannah River riding into the colony's harbor and the flatness and the evidently fruitful nature of the land. Lastly, he called attention to the aesthetics of the land, describing it as having a clear view of the sea, tall wooded trees along the sides, agreeable landscape, and wide waterways. While the appearance of the city's location was clearly of importance to future citizens, all these aesthetic attributes would have a positive impact in defense of the colony as well. As discussed previously,

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[62] Harden, *Savannah and South Georgia*, 12.
[63] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 8.

one of the reasons for the colony's commission was to have a presence in the southern part of America to be able to monitor French and Spanish colonial interests as well and a part of that defense is having an area that lends itself to a natural defense, which are features Savannah clearly had.

The above discussion greatly shed light on the aspects Oglethorpe felt most passionate about upon his landing at the land marked for Savannah. He intended to focus on, "health, safety, fertility of soil, and commodiousness of access."[64] Since Oglethorpe was a man of the Enlightenment, it makes sense these basic humanistic necessities combined with economic reasoning would be the focus of his endeavors. While that brief description would do well in recruiting hopeful colonists and serve as a nice introduction to his colonial endeavor, others, particularly the English government, wanted a fuller description to hear the early prognosis on their investment. In particular, Oglethorpe did one better and defended his exact choice for the cornerstone of his capital city. While he reused some of the ingredients from his previous proclamation, he included more detail and his own personal thought process in the defense of Savannah.

> I chose the Situation for the Town upon a high Ground forty-foot perpendicular above High-water Mark. The Soil dry and sandy, the Water of the River fresh, Springs coming out from all Sides of the Hills. I pitched on this place not only for the pleasantness of its Situation, but because from the above-mentioned and other signs I thought it healthy, for it sheltered from the Western and Southern winds (the worse in this country) by vast Woods and Pine-trees, many of which are one hundred, and few under seventy foot high. There is no Moss on the Trees, as in most parts of Carolina they are covered with it, and it hangs down two or three foot from them. The last and fullest consideration of the Healthfulness of the place was that as Indian nation, who knew the Nature of this Country, chose it for their habitation.[65]

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[64] Taylor, *Georgia Plan*, 14.
[65] Harden, *Savannah and South Georgia*, 15.

Again, Oglethorpe's mindfulness for the healthiness of the area stands out in this more detailed description. In regards to the freshness of the water, it is made clear that more than one resource in the area can provide it, a huge benefit to a growing city. The wording displays Oglethorpe as very sure of his choice when outlining his reasons for the placement of Savannah here; he states them with resoluteness. Two interesting facets to be found in this passage is one, the focus on the trees not being inhabited by moss as in Carolina. A bountiful amount of moss is a sign of a damp country, so with this inference the area selected by Oglethorpe appeared to be one that did not deal with excessive rainfall and humidity. The other instance of interest is his reasoning of it being a good place to colonize due to the fact Native Americans chose the area. While a vast majority of Europeans classified the Native Americans as savages, Oglethorpe's choice to use them as a persuasive factor in his choice of location presents a trust, one that he would act on when befriending Natives during colonization.

Beyond some brief descriptions like the ones above and bits and pieces of discussion involving the city's fundamental organization, not a lot regarding the plans of Savannah can be found, mostly because Oglethorpe and his planners intentionally kept it a secret.[66] The first expedition sent to start the colonization of Savannah was a crew of 149 people, "on the charity", led by James Oglethorpe in the first year of construction.[67] Upon arrival, Oglethorpe planted a benchmark on a high bluff from which everything in his city would be planned. He chose the site for its proximity to the mouth of the Savannah River.[68]

[66] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 73.
[67] Taylor, *Georgia Plan*, 72.
[68] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 85.

Early inspirations for the structuring of Oglethorpe's colonial city derived from Niccolo Machiavelli, who in turn modeled his guidelines on Roman designs. Four specific elements were outlined; the first was population should hearken to a "commodious Distribution of the People…living regularly and in Order." Next was religion, which kept a society stable; the third was a trained militia, which stood to be far more effective than a standing army. The final cornerstone for Oglethorpe's city was land allocation, and evidence presents that Savannah was designed with these classical principles in mind.[69] There are still other inspirations thought to hold influence for Oglethorpe's colonial city, as one historian posits the original design plans for Carolina, while still others opt for a variety of military design strategies, garden design strategies, and of course a variation from the design plans of the reconstruction of London.[70]

A glance over the overall design of Savannah and a key feature emerges that can perhaps be overlooked when getting lost in the accuracy of Oglethorpe's design. The model for Savannah in all its neat and orderliness lends itself to fostering social equality through physical design. Oglethorpe and his trustees established an instrumental goal to establish Georgia as an egalitarian society and creating a city where stratification was not physically possible helped to reinforce that aim.[71] A stratified society had emerged in every American colony up to this point and Oglethorpe was determined not to fall into the pattern. His belief was that a society could function much more efficiently in a system

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[69] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 57.

[70] Mark Reinberger, "Oglethorpe's Plan of Savannah: Urban Design, Speculative Freemasonry, and Enlightenment Charity." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 1997, 851.

[71] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 2.

of equality like his, rather than a gentrified society like what Penn created in Pennsylvania.[72]

The land allotment that Oglethorpe orchestrated when constructing Savannah is quite astonishing in looking at the accuracy of division of the land. Savannah as a whole was divided into four distinct areas: the city itself sat above the river on the bluff with common land to the west; beyond the commons was a grid of small lots for gardens and a larger square for a farm. But beyond the astonishment at how well he was able to breakdown the land, the grid was a reflection of Oglethorpe's rational thinking. As part of the settlement agreement, each family received a sixty-foot wide by ninety feet deep lot, a garden plot of five acres, and forty-four acres of farmland. The land package totaled around fifty acres.[73] The land organization followed as such: on the outskirts of the town just beyond the wards, the garden lots were situated and then beyond those the farm buildings to manage the farm land. Although the majority of citizens received the fifty-acre package, upon arrival some wealthy colonists who provided their own passage were given 500-acre packages if they brought at least ten servants along with them, who in turn served as laborers and soldiers. In a lesson learned from the growing pains of Philadelphia, Oglethorpe put in a provision that land was not for sale and succession followed male heirs only. He knew these policies were the best he could do to prevent property from being divided piecemeal into less than desirable plots.[74]

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[72] Paul S. Taylor, *Georgia Plan: 1732-1752* (The University of California, 1972), 3.
[73] Reinberger, "Oglethorpe's Plan of Savannah", 844.
[74] Reps, *Town Planning in Frontier America*, 165.

The total land encased in this grand plan for Savannah was ten miles long and seven miles deep.[75] Of course, stipulations existed in regards to the generous gift of land. One of the requirements in the grant of farmland was that each colonist agreed to grow mulberry trees to aid the colony's quest for a silk industry.[76]

Although maps from Oglethorpe's early days exist, they do not give perhaps the best judgment of his success in planning Savannah. If you look to a map created roughly seventy years after its original founding, as shown in this John McKinnon map of Savannah from the early 1800's (See Figure 2), it shows Oglethorpe's design plans had continually been observed through the city's growth, thus, showing how ingenious his plan was and how well thought out it was looking towards to the future.
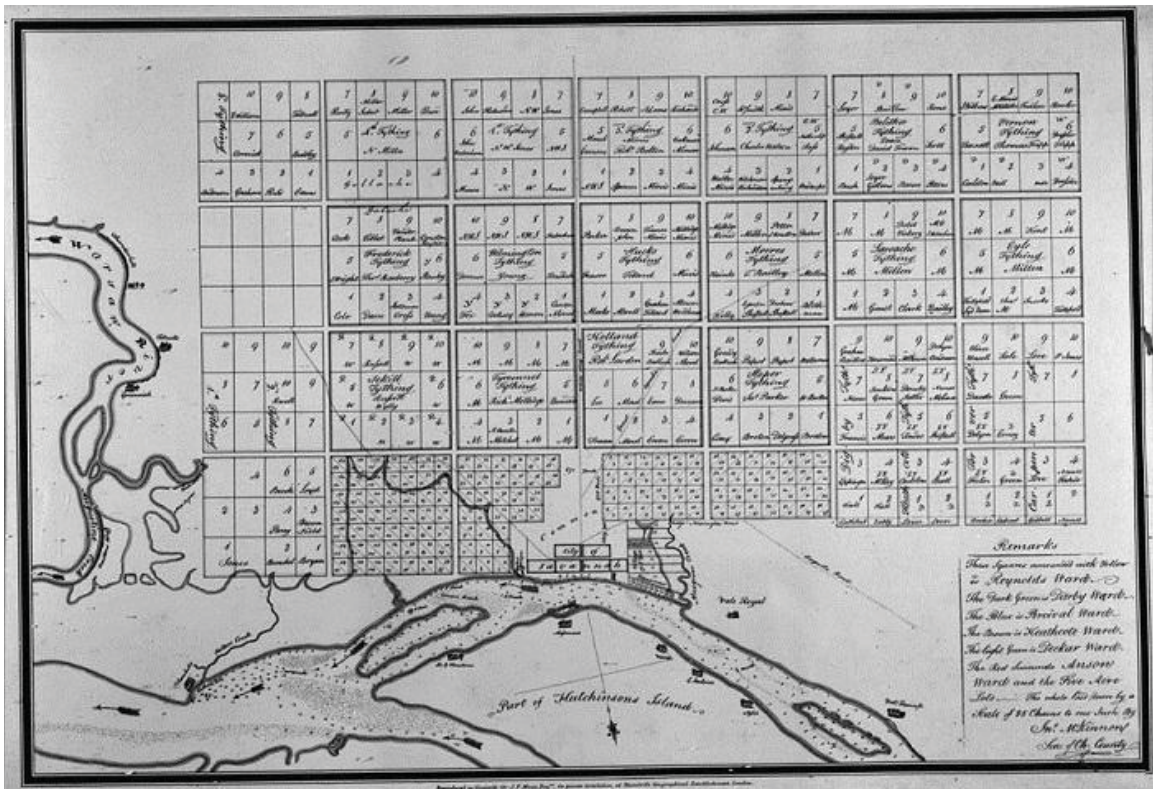

Figure 2: Map of Savannah c. 1800 (Courtesy of US Archives)

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[75] Laura Palmer Bell, "A New Theory on the Plan of Savannah." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 1964, 155.
[76] Bannister, "Oglethorpe's Sources", 49.

As stated above, not much exists of early maps of Savannah but there are a few early drawings of note. These early drawings of Savannah, used to recruit further settlers to the colony, were received with mixed messages from the audience. As described in Oglethorpe's narrative, Savannah was a settlement surrounded by woods, and the drawings often depicted just that, a small village surrounded by woods. The view often was drawn from an over looker's purview so to see all the settlement and outlying area. The intent was to show a well-organized and neatly built colony constructed within a natural barrier, by the woods. To the detractors, this may have portrayed the woods as a deterrent, almost as a barrier cutting them off from civilization. It is interesting to note, though, that these same qualities of isolation may have attracted pioneers who valued the virginity of the land, and those were the very people the artist was trying to lure.[77] It was the adventurer or a frontiersman that was perceived as a hard worker and thus the type of colonist Oglethorpe and company would want in Savannah. The hope, though, was the image of wide-open land with the opportunity to start over would stir up fervor in colonists to set sail for Savannah. Another eager intent of the trustees with their drawing of their fledgling city was to show their egalitarian society taming the frontier, a symbolic view showing equality could conquer the wild.[78]

A year after the colonists set foot on the land set aside to be Savannah, close to one hundred acres of land were cleared, an outline of a town was visible, homes for the colonists and fortifications erected. The plan as discussed earlier was gloriously simple in that it replicated a pattern throughout but kept a sense of beauty and creativity throughout. The plan for Savannah was simplified as such,

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[77] Reinberger, "Oglethorpe's Plan of Savannah", 844.

[78] Rodney M. Baine and Louis De Vorsey Jr., "The Provenance and Historical Accuracy of "A View of Savannah as it Stood the 29th of March, 1734." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 1989, 784.

The town is laid out for two hundred and forty freeholders; the quantity of land necessary for that number is twenty-four square miles; every forty houses in town make a ward, to which four square miles in the country belong; each ward has a constable, and under him four tything men. Where the town land ends, the villages begin; four villages make a ward without, which depends upon one of the wards within the town.[79]

The simplification of the plan was even exemplified in the directions of the city's layout. Each step of the city was very frankly mentioned with its dimensions, almost like directions we'd see for building things today. Everything was clear and concise, again a product of Oglethorpe's military career. Overall, the straightforward language used in detailing the plans for Savannah's construction facilitated its quick erection on the banks of the Savannah River.

This speed and alacrity of construction was accounted for not long after its founding when a nobleman from Hanover visited the fledgling city and described it as, "regularly laid out, divided into four Wards, in each of which is left a spacious Square, for holding of Markets, and other publick Uses. The streets are straight, and the Houses are all of the same Model and Dimensions, and well contrived for Conveniency."[80] Once again, the ideas of convenience and aesthetics arise in the nobleman's account of Savannah. Organization was something valued greatly by these people, especially in a colonial city sitting in the frontier. Open spaces for public use also emerged as a key attribute that is appreciated. Clearly, major importance was placed in portraying Savannah as well organized while also preserving a creative aesthetic cityscape.

Another account of Savannah exists from August 23, 1738, five years after its original founding, by Colonel William Stephens, one of the trustees. He wrote,

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[79]Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 65.
[80] Taylor, *Georgia Plan*, 73.

> There is already a considerable Trade in the River; and there is in this Town a Court-house, a Gaol, a Store-House, a large House for receiving the Indians, a Wharf or Bridge, a Guard-House, and some other publick Buildings; a publick Garden of ten Acres cleared, fenced, and planted with Orange-Trees, Mulberry-Trees, Vines, some Olives which thrive very well, Peaches, Apples.[81]

What emerges from Stephens' account is devout attention paid to the economics of Savannah. His language lauds the success of the colony as a port city and as an agrarian community. An important aspect he also did not fail to mention was the numerous public buildings in the colony; this is probably a rhetorical tool by Stephens to make sure it was apparent the classless society growing in Savannah was a successful and industrious one with all things necessary to be a desirable destination.

Looking at maps of Savannah like those shown earlier in Figure 2, it appears Oglethorpe's plans for design was thoroughly well carried out as the regional plan transferred well into the future. With each expansion needed, the boundaries of the garden, farm, and villages all fit within the grid plan. The original plan established by Oglethorpe was meant for a minimum four square miles of town and gardens, twenty-four square miles of farms, twenty-four square miles of villages, which encompassed a fifty-two square mile area.[82]

The merits of Oglethorpe's plan speak for themselves when looking at the map. He addressed overcrowding far into the future, an issue many cities including Penn's Philadelphia ran into, with his ward system, which encouraged the growth of the city.[83] The identical design that Oglethorpe had represented throughout his city design carried through into the smallest of denominations in Savannah, as the interior of each ward was laid out identically as well. As part of his quest for equality, he wanted there to be no

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[81] Taylor, *Georgia Plan*, 117.
[82] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 66.
[83] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 78.

wealthy or poor section in his city. It was meant as a symbolic effort to create an egalitarian city design to match the egalitarian society Oglethorpe was building at Savannah. In the midst of creating a city of equality, the little aesthetic changes like the alternating of squares with streets and public and private areas helped Savannah retain a unique design among other monotonous city plans during the nineteenth century.[84] A unique addition that Oglethorpe included in the town square was a sundial, an apparent common occurrence in village greens, but one not particularly seen in previous colonial cities.[85] This unique inclusion suggests he wanted the citizens of Savannah to use their time wisely and so provided them an avenue in which to accurately identify the passing of time.

Each of the wards was divided into equal sized components, including the house lots. There were four elements in each ward, four groups of housing lots called tything blocks, four lots for public use called trust blocks, and a central square for various activities.[86] The center of each ward was also aligned to all the others to keep things uniform and easy to construct. The uniformity even carried through to the street system as the streets that bordered the wards to the north and south spanned ninety feet in width, while the streets on the east and west sides of the wards were forty-five feet wide.[87] Each housing lot had sixty feet in frontage and was ninety feet deep and each house had street access to its front and its rear, and of course fencing to divide each as well. The houses were built with ample distance between to prevent the spread of disease and ravaging fire. From there the houses had some length of individuality but most of the early homes

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[84] Reinberger, "Oglethorpe's Plan of Savannah", 847.
[85] Bell, "A New Theory", 154.
[86] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 86.
[87] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 88.

kept a simple aesthetic.[88] The homes themselves were constructed to be twenty-four feet

long and sixteen feet wide, while being a story and eight feet tall and sat two feet above

the ground on a log base.[89] However, during the growth of the city, in many cases lots

were split so two homes were built instead of one each with a thirty-foot house.[90]

    As a mostly agrarian society, Savannah, in order to succeed, timetables had to be

put in place to ensure everyone used their land grants advantageously. Once a land grant

was awarded, the person had eighteen months to, "erect one House of Brick or framed,

square timber work, on their respective Town Lotts, containing at the least Twenty four

feet in length, upon Sixteen in breadth, and eight feet in height for the full term of three

years." They were also expected to cultivate ten acres of land as well within a three-year

period of earning their land grant.[91] It wasn't a tall order requested by the trustees to

retain the land but it did push for a productive society, which by all accounts, is what the

trustees sought.

    The last aspect of Savannah's unique construction is in regards of the inclusion of

a common in Savannah, "Without the town, a mile square, which amounts to 640 acres,

might be reserved as a common for the pasturing of the cattle and all within musket shot

of the works should be cleared. This open space will contribute greatly to the health and

security of the town as well as to the conviency of the inhabitants."[92] The open spaces

allotted by Oglethorpe by his common grounds throughout the city helped to preserve

city greenery, promote health, and presented an advantageous defense plan for the

citizens in the case of an attack. But the spaces throughout were also allotted space for

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[88] Harden, *Savannah and South Georgia*, 18.
[89] Baine and De Vorsey Jr., "The Provenance and Historical Accuracy", 812.
[90] Bell, "A New Theory", 153.
[91] Harden, *Savannah and South Georgia*, 27.
[92] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 90.

markets and useful venues for the population.[93] It was all a part of Oglethorpe's

Savannah plan to emphasize the neighborhood, which really hearkened to a sense of

community. Some of the most amazing aspects of the plan were that it provided no clear

delineation of an ultimate border, nor a center of government. The one area that best

meets the qualifications as a center of town was the public square but that was designed

for buildings of charitable and communal use, such as ovens, mills, storehouses, and a

hostel.[94]

What was unique about Savannah that not many other colonial cities witnessed

was the issue of safety. While Oglethorpe held a policy of peace with the Native

Americans, there was still the issue of security that had to be addressed. However,

beyond the possibility of native invasion, there was the issue of the two other nearby

European powers, France and Spain, which must be addressed. The severity of this threat

to the trustees manifested itself early as one of the first construction projects undertaken

within the first five months were fortifications. Two blockhouses were fitted with cannon

to be, "musket shell proof and vary defensible", as a guardhouse for the colony.[95] The

guardhouse stood within the palisades, a foot thick, which rounded just off the Savannah

River. With roughly twenty canons mounted in the palisades continually manned by

guards, it was clear Oglethorpe was prepared.[96] The palisades were seventeen feet high

but only rounded out the eastern side of the city; the western palisades were considered

optional once it was discovered the natives near the colony were of an amicable nature.[97]

It was once again to the benefit of Savannah that its founder was a man with a military

[93] Harden, *Savannah and South Georgia*, 19.
[94] Reinberger, "Oglethorpe's Plan of Savannah", 850.
[95] Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan*, 102.
[96] Harden, *Savannah and South Georgia*, 19.
[97] Baine and De Vorsey Jr., "The Provenance and Historical Accuracy", 809.

background, which allowed for effective decision making in creating the defense of Savannah.

Conclusion

Overall, the city of Savannah presents a vastly different kind of American colonial city. It sought organization all while keeping a sense of individuality. It introduced a unique quest to create an egalitarian society, something that only existed in the books of philosophers. It was an attempt by Oglethorpe to cast off the structure of a monarchial society and build one where everyone started on equal footing and people's individual merits were the soul reason for their social improvement. The society that emerged in Savannah upon its founding was, granted, very similar to the society found in other American colonies, except that a great number of the people that resided in Savannah valued their situation more than others and to that end had a greater stake in the colony's success. Many, who arrived on charity, were given a second chance to succeed in life and took it graciously. Otherwise, we see a very similar trend in the colonists valuing open spaces but still wanting the aesthetics of a city.

Looking ahead to Chapter 3, we examine a city founded just before the start of the 19th century. Cleveland, Ohio, founded in 1796, presents a unique comparison to the two previously discussed cities, as it was a city founded in a new country, the United States. While it does present another example of a port city, it is a different kind of port city, as it was a frontier port on the Great Lakes in the interior of the country. Cleveland was one of the first cities founded in the interior in the years leading up to the start of America's quest to Manifest Destiny.

Chapter 3: Cleveland: The City on the Lake

Cleveland was one of the first cities founded in the frontier of the young nation, the United States. The rhetoric that outlined its design took the status as a frontier town very seriously and lauded it as a very important excursion for America. As a frontier city, the surveyors had the opportunity to exert man's dominance over nature. Cleveland was first city in the Northwest Territory, an area that contained the present states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin, it was one of the first colonizing attempts of the fledging American nation in its quest to the west. While Cleveland shares one basic trait with the two previously discussed cities, Philadelphia and Savannah, because it is a port city like the others, from there on it is a unique Midwestern city. Access to waterways was still an extremely important feature for the growth of the city but previously the major ports in the United States were ones on the Atlantic Ocean or on a nearby river that quickly connected it to the ocean. Cleveland, on the other hand, sat in the interior of the country, but thanks in large part to the Great Lakes, particularly Lake Erie on which the city resides, and the Cuyahoga River, it had the opportunity to emerge as an important port city for the interior of the United States in its early years.

Historical Background

The area of northeast Ohio in which Cleveland is located has a rich history but perhaps one that is not written vividly in the historical narrative. Originally, Native Americans occupied the land wholly until French explorers stumbled upon the land in their travels. The French established a minimalist presence in the area and during their time interacted in a friendly fashion with the Natives all the while. The French and Indian War brought change to the region with a sound British victory that passed the land from

French to British property. Though the British owned the land there were no attempts at colonization, mostly due to the British attempting to prevent any hostilities with the natives after the war. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 forbade colonial settlement beyond the proclamation line that ran along the Appalachian Mountains. Following the American Revolution, the newly freed Americans viewed the Native lands as acquirable territory with the right diplomacy. Cleveland was part of this territory that belonged to the state of Connecticut going back to its original royal charter. [98] However, upon the American Revolution and subsequent freedom of the United States, Connecticut sought to sell its property in the interior in favor of help with its war debt. While Connecticut managed to part with some of the land to the American government, it retained a 120-mile swath of land located in modern-day northeast Ohio, the Connecticut Western Reserve. Alas, the land was a tough sell, though, because of fear of tensions with the natives that resided in the area.[99] Eventually, purchasers materialized with the right resources to put the region to good use.

The land on Lake Erie looked appealing for development, as it sat on flat terrain with what appeared to be an ideal harbor. In 1795, a group of thirty-five men known as The Connecticut Land Group purchased the Western Reserve for one million two hundred thousand dollars. The total land purchase was two million eight hundred and thirty seven thousand one hundred acres.[100] The land purchased contained vast untamed wilderness, but great economic potential seemed a very viable option there. It was within this land purchase that the city of Cleveland was founded as the capital of the Western

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[98] Samuel P. Orth, *A History of Cleveland, Ohio: Volume 1* (Cleveland, OH: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1910), 38.

[99] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 93.

[100] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 40.

Reserve and the port city for the economic endeavor in America. Of course, one of the first steps was dividing the Western Reserve into more manageable areas. To do this, townships were established out of the Western Reserve; using the Pennsylvania line as the meridian, the ranges spanned westward for twenty-four townships that amounted to one hundred twenty miles. Each township contained five miles, and they were numbered northward from the forty-first parallel of latitude up to the shores of Lake Erie.[101]

After dividing the Western Reserve into townships, the planning went into effect for establishing a capital. General Moses Cleaveland was the man assigned the task of establishing the capital city. The construction of this city served to be, at the time, the westernmost settlement in the United States.[102] The founders of the Connecticut Land Group granted Cleaveland the power to use whatever he deemed necessary to peacefully deal with the natives of the area, survey the land purchase, and erect a capital city.[103] Upon arrival at the area designated for the capital city, Cleaveland erected a small cabin at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River in the summer of 1796. It was by that fall Cleaveland and company that planning started on the layout of the city of Cleveland.

The total area contained in Cleveland Township was twenty-five thousand, two hundred and forty acres, which allotted plenty of space to work with in designing a capital city. The task of designing the capital of the Western Reserve fell on Seth Pease, Amos Spadaford, and Augustus Porter, who were assigned as a group to survey the city. Interestingly enough, when Cleaveland went to work on the city he imagined it growing into a small hamlet perched upon the shoreline of Lake Erie resembling a small seaside

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[101] Charles Whittlesey, *Early History of Cleveland* (Cleveland, OH: Fairbanks, Benedict & Co, 1867), 191.
[102] Edmund H. Chapman, "City Planning under Mercantile Expansion: The Case of Cleveland, Ohio." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 1951, 10.
[103] James Kennedy Harrison, *A History of The City of Cleveland: Its Settlement, Rise, and Progress 1796-1896* (Cleveland, OH: The Imperial Press, 1896), 24.

New England town.[104] Truth be told, though, The Connecticut Land Group wasn't

necessarily interested in establishing communities as Cleaveland dreamt; they were more

so just worried about the selling of the property.[105] This differing philosophy of the city's

growth certainly added to its slow start. However, on the other side, being a creation of

Connecticut businessmen was a benefit that gave the city an identity. Shipping was an

important part of Connecticut's economy, so they understood the importance of maritime

commerce and the Connecticut Land Group quickly reinforced the upstart harbor on the

lake.

Ships were almost immediately used upon the creation of the harbor and

shipbuilding started just as quickly. Shipbuilding was not the only economical enterprise

encouraged by the Connecticut Land Group. They offered blacksmiths special deals to

start up forges in the city, which combined with the maritime prowess helped early iron

works rise in prominence.[106] The economically driven interests of the founders may have

hindered the city's growth in the early years and in many ways conflicted with the man

they selected as the visionary for the city but in the end, it helped fuel the fire that turned

Cleveland into a metropolitan success. This is not to forget the role the earliest pioneers

of Cleveland played. They arrived with altogether different aims than the Connecticut

Land Company, or the city's founders. These people came with the idea to start a new

town for a new home.

The earliest colonies were founded as a result of a great number of men wanting

more space and all these years later, that interest had not changed. The Western Reserve

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[104] Carol Poh Miller and Robert A. Wheeler, *Cleveland: A Concise History, 1796-1996* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 2.
[105] Miller and Wheeler, *Cleveland: A Concise History*, 10.
[106] Frederick A. Van Fleet, "Cleveland: The Evolution of a City." *The North American Review*, 1931, 369.

offered the opportunity for a great amount of untamed land to be possessed by Americans rather than continually reside in the increasingly crowded New England states. Once again, it emerges that just like all the previous pioneers in the cities previously discussed, the citizens of Cleveland wanted space. Years' later, James Garfield, a native of the Western Reserve, said, "Its pioneers were not ignorant and thoughtless adventurers, but men of established characters, whose opinions on civil and religious liberty had grown with their growth and become the settled convictions of their mature years."[107] Cleveland may have started as a frontier town but through the driving force and economic and social merit eventually became a beacon of modernity in the American hinterland.

When it came time to name the city, the surveyors originally suggested naming it Cuyahoga for the river in which it resided but many thought the word sounded too native and perhaps too hard to pronounce. Eventually, a name was agreed upon, Cleaveland, in honor of the general overseeing its creation. While the general's name was given as the namesake to the city, a slight change occurred in its spelling to make it as it appears today. The story behind the spelling change the city features to this day is all thanks to a local paper, *The Cleaveland Advertiser*. They suffered damage to the A type letter and since the nearest place to purchase new type was Philadelphia or New York, the damaged A was left out and it became Cleveland out of convenience, and the spelling stuck.[108]

Although, not much in rhetoric remains from the original foundational plans of Cleveland, what writing does exist takes the form of imperative writing. They read like directions with little or no room at all for a narrative, as seen previously in Philadelphia and Savannah. The surveyors of Cleveland arrived with a job to do and planned to

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[107] Fleet, "Cleveland.", 368.
[108] Harrison, *A History of The City of Cleveland*, 44.

oversee it come to fruition. The attention solely to construction illuminates how the focus of city building had changed, whereas both Philadelphia and Savannah carried with them social reasons for their urban venture, Cleveland was largely an economic venture. This is not to say that the society destined to live there did not play a role in the design for the preservation of greenery by the surveyors evidenced recreation in an urban setting was a respected and recognized human desire. An importance paid to practicality is the best way to describe the rhetoric attached to Cleveland. The surveyors did keep in mind aesthetics for the good of the public to the best of their ability but did so without damaging the economic viability of the city

Design Plans

From a simple glance, in its early years Cleveland looked like a seaside New England town transplanted into the forest. The original plan evidenced no originality, as it depicted a New England town without taking into account the geography. The New England town plan focused on a perfect square and the triangular situation of the plateau Cleveland was situated on required an adaptation. The plan launched three tracts of the traditional square plan and then a fourth truncated version fit nicely between Lake Erie and the Cuyahoga River.[109] This adaptation of the traditional town plan, while criticized for no creativity, in actuality presents a situation of practicality and creativity melded together. It only made sense for the surveyors to use a pattern that had previous success as their model. Not to mention from a business point of view, logic and traditions of success were two integral things, so with that in mind the original plan of Cleveland made a great deal.

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[109] Edmund H. Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis A Case Study of Problems of Urban Development in Nineteenth-century America* (Cleveland, OH: The Press of Western Reserve University, 1964), 6.

Just the same, to say creativity was lacking in the plan is a foolhardy statement. As discussed, the New England model did not transplant well to Cleveland's geography so there are criticisms that it did not conform to the river valley in any way and took little advantage of the large lake to its north. The simple fact they were able to adapt the traditional plan into an area that was not conducive to such a layout, though, presents an element of creativity that cannot be overlooked. The plans for Cleveland featured the simple gridiron street pattern along with the traditional public commons in the middle of the town betwixt the evenly spaced streets. [110] Originally, a plan existed to preserve all adjoining lots to Public Square for public use as well or plans for reservation of lakefront to keep the most iconic views of the city protected, with important opportunities for parks.[111] Alas, both plans were dashed early mostly due to the incompatibility of land preservation to the city's fiscal development. With this information, there is evidence that once again, the designers of the city valued greenery but in this situation, that desire went beyond the issues of a fresh and healthy start the planners wanted greenery for the aesthetics.

The language in the planning of Cleveland carried a more professional tone, so to speak, than seen in the previous examples of Philadelphia and Savannah. It is very matter of fact, specific, and directional, akin to modern directions. It carries with it a sense of purpose, which the people tasked with laying out Cleveland certainly had.

Features unique to Cleveland, though, were the wider roads throughout the city. Superior Street was established as the city's main thoroughfare at 132 feet in width, the other streets 99 feet; these were comparatively larger than any streets located on the east

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[110] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 41.
[111] Chapman, "City Planning under Mercantile Expansion", 11.

coast. Superior Street ran to the riverbank and so it was wider, as a result of careful consideration for increased traffic due to water access.[112] This adaptation from the traditional New England plan was perhaps orchestrated because they better understood the dimensions of land they were dealing with and had thought through better ways to utilize it. Whatever the reasons, the wide streets greatly helped facilitate Cleveland's meteoric rise in the 19th century as an economic hub in the Midwest.

The original plan placed 220 plots surrounding Public Square, which was situated directly in the center of city.[113] Cleveland's public common followed the traditional New England style as "The Square is laid out at the intersection of Superior Street and Ontario Street, and contains ten acres. The center of the junction of the two roads is the exact center of the Square." As expected with the attachment of the word public, the land in the square was devoted to public use forever. Public Square, like its predecessors in towns all over the east coast of America, served as a focal point for community activities and gatherings, as well as recreational activity and public buildings. While the city may have been originally established for purely economic gains, it was understood that recreation was a part of life and greenery had a place in the urban setting. Perhaps another reason for its traditional design was the square blocks of the city superimposed on an untamed wilderness a sense of neatness and orderliness, which presented an example of man taming nature, an element very much a prideful part of the American identity in the 19th century.[114]

Cleveland early on had very definite boundaries that stopped at roads that butted against natural boundaries such as the lake and river. From the center of Public Square,

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[112] Miller and Wheeler, *Cleveland: A Concise History*, 9.
[113] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 42.
[114] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 7.

the northern boundary was Lake Street, the eastern boundary of the city was Erie Street,

Water Street was the boundary to the west, and Huron Street was the boundary to the

south.[115] The plan appears straightforward and sensible with its use of the natural

boundaries to contain the city. As discussed earlier, many considered the Cleveland plan

to be lacking in creativity, but the surveyors clearly identified the future growth of the

city by allotting the land into tracts of ten acres, 100 acres as you traveled further from

the city center.[116] It was this sensible surveying that allowed Cleveland to easily expand,

as the land tracts were easily divisible. However, it also served as a way to harness an

agricultural community, with a city center surrounded by outlying farmland just a walk

away.[117] As you traveled farther from the center of Cleveland, the lots kept their width

but increased in depth, ranging from ten acres up to one hundred. The logic was property

value was considered diminished as one moved farther from the center of town, so more

land must be appropriated to keep the value the same.[118] The designing of Cleveland,

unlike Philadelphia and Savannah, was affected a great deal by financial issues. While

finances made a much larger impact in the design, it was not the sole factor, as evidenced

by the inclusion of public lands.

The original map depicted all the original lots, 220 in all, and all fourteen streets

planned for Superior, Water, Mandrake, Union, Vineyard, Bath, Lake, Erie, Federal,

Maiden, Ontario, Huron, Miami, and Ohio.[119] (See Figure 3)

[115] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 5.
[116] Harrison, *A History of The City of Cleveland*, 46.
[117] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 7.
[118] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 43.
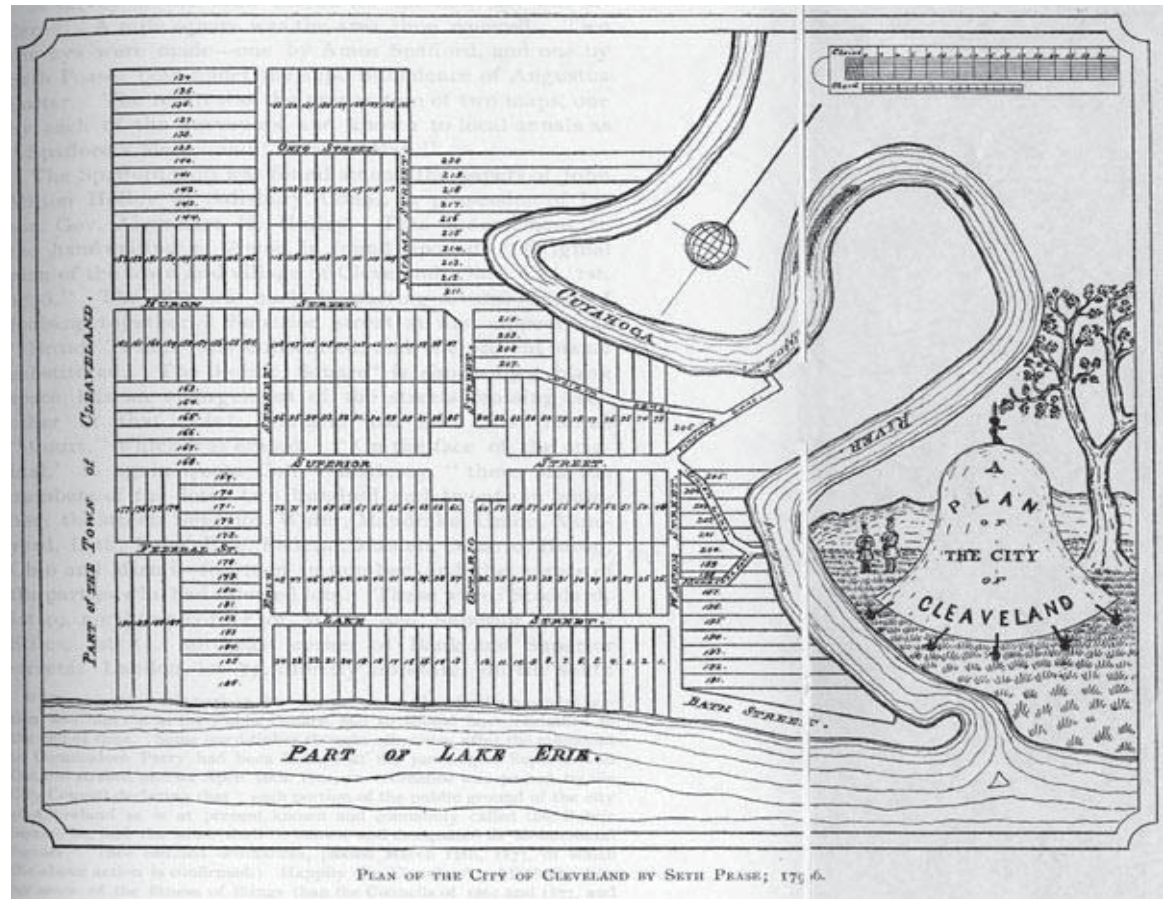[119] Harrison, *A History of The City of Cleveland*, 41.

Figure 3: Map of the City of Cleveland by Seth Pease; 1796 (Courtesy of Cleveland State University)

While the map looked impressive in the early years, the only street completely cleared of trees was Superior west of Public Square.[120] Cleveland, due to its unique geographical situation, would feature a different kind of city growth via radial expansion, which necessitated the creation of side streets for better access throughout.[121] Superior was designed with the express role of being the main thoroughfare through the city and, as such, was one of the widest streets in America. All the finest Cleveland had to offer was focused on Superior. Fine houses were constructed in the early years and the areas only shopping district was erected on it.[122]

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[120] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 51.
[121] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 52.
[122] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 53.

Once again, a very practical personality emerges in the city's planners when observing origins of street names. The streets were named after geographical areas in which they were situated or by the name of a nearby property owner. As for the lot numbers, there was no rhyme or reason for that, but just random selection.[123] Meanwhile, the pricing of the lots followed a very methodical pattern, one that encouraged purchase of large land plots for those who had the wealth to build the land up. The land rates stood at $3.00 per acre for ten acres, $2.00 per acre for twenty acres, and $1.50 per acre for one hundred acres, an obvious attempt to bring about a populace to the frontier city.[124]

The following year after the original foundation and layout of the primary roads saw the addition of three highways that connected the city to neighboring townships. These three roads, North Highway (St. Clair Avenue) paralleled the shores of Lake Erie as an extension of Federal Street, Central Highway (Euclid Avenue) started from the east end of Huron Street, and South Highway (Kinsman Avenue) extended from Erie Street and ran southwest.[125] The connection of Cleveland to the neighboring communities was the recognition of the surveyors that if and when an expansion of the city took place that traffic could easily flow from all bordering neighborhoods with these connections.

A major legacy the surveyors of Cleveland left behind was the accuracy in which the surveying was done using the traditional compass and iron chain method.[126] One surveyor remarked years later when looking at Cleveland, "this city is one of the best monumented cities of land," at how accurate property had been divided. This accuracy was achieved in part thanks to their simple surveying techniques. They surveyed each

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[123] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 53.
[124] Whittlesey, *Early History of Cleveland*, 234.
[125] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 5.
[126] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 44.

plot equally, regardless of the terrain, so there would be no inequality found in each. In addition, they kept the sizes of the lots simple, as noted earlier, so no arguments could be made for the property.[127] While this made for some nontraditional plots of land, the logic stands up well. Once again, this presents another example of the clear logic and business drive of Cleveland's early planners. It is yet again an example of the practical nature of the surveyors discussed above that emerges out of rhetoric.

While, according to the map, Cleveland looked to be neatly cleaned of vegetation, the fact of the matter was it was an oasis in the midst of woods, which made early life there troublesome. To make matters worse, in the early years the city dealt with several bouts of illness as a result of the pioneer life that greatly diminished the population but perseverance of the early pioneers continued to breathe life in the fledgling pioneer town as things developed.[128] A great deal of stumps and bushes remained in the peripheries of the city lots through the first decade of its existence and roughly half of Public Square was still densely forested, with the other half littered with stumps.[129]

The early homes in Cleveland were hastily built, just as the city had been hastily cleared of greenery. The homes were often a total of eighteen square feet, had paper for windows, a door and an open floor made of split boards, one floor, and no chimney. The first homes were built of the simple log cabin variety until time and comfort allowed residents to build traditional brick and mortar homes.[130] There was the occasional upper loft but in most cases, the houses stood primitively with the settlers doing what they

[127] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 7.
[128] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 10.
[129] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 12.
[130] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 12.

could as time went on to customize the abode into a comfortable home.[131] Meanwhile, any other buildings besides homes were not even thought of in the early years. Once again, an economical line of thinking emerges with this early settlement pattern. The early pioneers established simple presences in the early years so they had a place to rest their head after a day's work.

The first large scale building in Cleveland was a warehouse built in 1817, although the city did have a courthouse, equipped with jail cells, built as early as 1812.[132] Education appeared as a point of early importance in Cleveland as the first school was built in 1817 and then was replaced by The Academy in 1821 since the school had been outgrown. The new schoolhouse was described as, "A neat and convenient Academy, built of brick, with a handsome spire, and with a spacious room in the second story, designed for public uses."[133] Soon after, a second courthouse was built in 1828 to serve the larger population in Cleveland and, interestingly enough, the first church was not erected in Cleveland until 1829.[134] The settlement pattern described here further solidifies Cleveland's status in its early years as a business venture primarily with only simple homes being built. That is furthermore identified when the first large scale building constructed was a warehouse, continuing the very much business sense of the city. In its second decade, we see the construction of a schoolhouse and the start of the city's transformation from a business venture into a home.

The founders of Cleveland gave a very thorough treatment why that spot between the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie posed the ideal spot for a city. There were several

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[131] Harrison, *A History of The City of Cleveland*, 78.
[132] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 13.
[133] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 23.
[134] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 33.

reasons selected for the spot of Cleveland which enumerate the benefits the land

presented,

> 1) Because it admits small Sloops into its mouth from the Lake, and affords them a good Harbour. 2) Because it is navigable at all times with Canoes to the Falls, a distance of upwards of 60 miles by water – and with Boats at some seasons of the year to that place – and may without any great Expense be made Navigable that distance at all times. 3) Because there is the best prospect of Water communication from Lake Erie into the Ohio, by way of Cuyahoga & Muskingum Rivers: The carrying place being the shortest of all carrying places, which interlock with each other & at most not above 4 miles. 4) Because of the Fishery which may be erected at its mouth, a place to which the White Fish of the Lake resort in the Spring, in order to Spawn. 5) Because there is a great deal of land of the first Quality on this River. 6) Because not only the River itself, has a clear & lively current, but all the Waters & Springs emptying in the same, prove by their clearness & current, that it must be a healthy Country in general. 7) Because one principle Land Road not only from the Allegheny River & French Creek; but also from Pittsburg will pass thro that Country to Detroit, it being by far the most level Land path to that place.[135]

The list of reasons presented above for Cleveland's existence enumerates seven important

reasons, all of which detail an important geographical feature of the city's placement and

the importance thereof. More importantly, it explains how said geographical features are

important to the city for financial means. This is a major change of motive compared to

the rationalization for construction of the previous two cities. Yes, both Philadelphia and

Savannah had their financial reasons for construction, but they both featured

humanitarian efforts as well, whereas Cleveland's defense solely lies on its financial

value. It reflects not a completely different society, but does show that values may have

changed in the one hundred or so years between the different settlements. It can also

point to the fact that instead of being part of a British colony, as Philadelphia and

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[135] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 90.

Savannah were upon their creation, Cleveland was an American creation so the people set on moving there did not see it as an attempt to escape a non-ideal situation.

The primeval forests played a pivotal role in the growth of Cleveland, as the planners kept its frontier location in mind the entire time. Unfortunately, only the heart of the city ever lived up to the original plans; as is often times the case, city growth took on a mind of its own. While the original city plat was only a mile square with Lake Erie, Cuyahoga River, and Huron and Erie streets as its boundaries, as the city started to grow, the population arose in areas outside the center in places where it was most convenient to establish a homestead. Homes spread out in a radial fashion, preventing proper aesthetic planning. There may have been the opportunity in an orderly fashion to establish beautiful geographic vistas but that was not to be.[136] Therefore, while it seems economic ventures were the sole driving force behind its development, there is evidence, as mentioned before, in the wish to preserve pristine shoreline to keep Cleveland beautiful.

As the population grew, so did commerce, as railroad tracks and wharves sprung up on the south side of the city bordering the river, fueling its growth.[137] What helped further fuel Cleveland's prospects was the United States' government naming it a port of entry in 1805 for Canada.[138] With the connection of Cleveland via roads to Wooster and the Ohio River, things started to prosper greatly for the isolated city shortly after the War of 1812.[139] In 1814, Cleveland was incorporated into a village, "so much of the plat of Cleveland, in the township of Cleveland, and the county of Cuyahoga, as lies northerly of Huron Street, so called, and westerly of Erie Street, so called, in said city plat, as

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[136] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 45.
[137] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 46.
[138] Miller and Wheeler, *Cleveland: A Concise History*, 16.
[139] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 17.

originally laid out by the Connecticut Land Company." In 1818, the city was attached to

a mail couch route through Painesville, which brought regular deliveries to and from the

east. 1818 also saw the introduction of the first steamboat to Lake Erie, Walk-in-the-

Water, which helped facilitate water travel across the lake and assured Cleveland's lake

port of prosperity.[140] In 1836, just over two decades since it was incorporated into a

village, Cleveland became a city,

> Beginning at low water mark on the shore of Lake Erie, at the most northeasterly
> of Cleveland ten acre lot No. 139, and running thence on the dividing line
> between lots numbered 139 and 140, numbers 107 and 108, numbers 80 and 81,
> numbers 55 and 56, numbers 31 and 32, and numbers 6 and 7, of the ten acre lots,
> to the south line of ten acre lots; thence on the south line of the ten acre lots, to the
> Cuyahoga river; thence to the center of the Cuyahoga river, thence down the same
> to the extreme point of the west pier of the harbor; thence to the township line
> between Brooklyn and Cleveland; thence to the line northerly to the county line;
> thence eastwardly with said line to a point due north of the place of beginning;
> thence south to the place of beginning.[141]

The economic benefits for Cleveland's location soon paid off in a very noticeable

way for the frontier city. Within fifty years, the city of Cleveland boasted a population of

just over 10,000 but the population quadrupled in the next twenty years.[142] The greatest

argument for the city's success was its location on waterways, one of the premier reasons

the founders chose the location they did. Beyond the natural ease of access Cleveland

had, further access was made available through canal systems. In 1825, work started on

the Erie Canal, which with luck was set to involve northeast Ohio. The first stretch joined

Cleveland to Akron in 1827 and then five years later Lake Erie was connected to the

Ohio River. From there countless branches were established across eastern Ohio.[143] Other

canal systems connected Cleveland to Canada, east through the Erie Canal, and south to

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[140] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 18.
[141] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 47.
[142] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 112.
[143] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 37.

the Ohio River, which in turn connected to Cleveland to the main arteries of the United States.[144]

By the time the canals were connected to the various rivers and great lakes in 1829, Cleveland no longer resembled the struggling frontier town it was in its early years but a proper New England city set in the Midwest, as intended.[145] While Cleveland for the early part of its history followed the traditional eastern pattern for city design, as it expanded to the northwest, south, and east eventually there came a time when it had to adapt to its land and thus innovated the diagonal street, adopting a relatively new city design.[146] The diagonal streets were a departure from the traditional planning along plot lines, but in 1830 with the extension of Euclid Avenue to Public Square that cut across lots, it emerged as a logical option in city design.[147] Just a decade later, the city expanded twice its size when it incorporated all the original ten-acre lots of Cleveland Township.[148]

Conclusion

The lasting legacy the colonists of the Western Reserve left, as residents of Connecticut, were their ideals of community. With their colonization of the Western Reserve, they extended the idea of a village community into the west.[149] The settlement pattern was one that quickly multiplied across the Midwest as the population of the United States spread out becoming an iconic settlement style. One unique aspect of the city center of Cleveland that cannot be overlooked is that it has largely stayed intact through the years, a credit to the planners' ability to foresee the future even after the

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[144] Harrison, *A History of The City of Cleveland*, 60.
[145] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 19.
[146] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 35.
[147] Chapman, "City Planning under Mercantile Expansion", 12.
[148] Orth, *A History of Cleveland*, 48.
[149] Harrison, *A History of The City of Cleveland*, 86.

country community disappeared into the growing metropolis during the mid 19th century.[150]

Largely a byproduct of its unique geographical location, the expansion of the city preserved the original center because of its physical placement: as the metropolis changed, it was forced to adhere to the framework established by the founders.[151] Traditionally, as seen in the development of most cities, including Philadelphia and Savannah, the original plans often fall by the wayside for the logistics of the city growth, but Cleveland experienced the unique opportunity to preserve its plan, even if it was somewhat of an unexpected turn of serendipity due to the city's natural environment.

In the end, Cleveland may have been founded on different principles than the previously discussed cities but in its evolution, it enveloped many similar traits. Business may have driven its foundation but when realities unfolded and a populace was imagined a very similar trend emerged. People wanted the comfort of a city with a country atmosphere, which once again brought about a city common, in this case Public Square. The lots were designed to give citizens ample land that they could afford and use and the city itself was designed to be spacious so not everything felt cluttered, all features the citizens of Philadelphia and Savannah looked forward to as well.

What is different and cannot be overlooked is with how much importance business drove the city's growth and success. Whereas, both Philadelphia and Savannah both, of course, kept economic issues in mind, a great deal of their design was focused on aesthetics and the people. In Cleveland, business seemed to drive many decisions, although concessions were made to keep the populace and environment in mind at the

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[150] Chapman, *Cleveland: Village to Metropolis*, 6.
[151] Chapman, "City Planning under Mercantile Expansion", 10.

same time. The result is while Cleveland in many ways has a great many similarities to the previously mentioned cities, it is by and large a unique creation, a Midwestern city. Cleveland is an example where a hybridization of form and function meet, where practicality meets personalization to create a uniquely designed city.

The final chapter visits another Midwestern city, but rather than examining its foundation origins, we see it redesigned. Chicago fell victim to a great fire that decimated much of the city. Around the turn of the 20th century the city was bestowed the honor of holding the World's Fair and therefore necessitated a complete redesign to satisfy the city's wanderlust for the view. But by being the product of a redesign The Chicago Plan of 1909 presents a unique contrast to the previous three chapters and examines how well a city stands the test of time and what happens when the opportunity is presented to redesign.

Chapter 4: Chicago: A City Rebuilt

Chicago was first established in 1833 with just two hundred people but quickly developed and laid claim to the fastest growing city in the world for years. It, similarly to Cleveland, thrived as a transport city, although Chicago had the luck of being on the Great Lakes and that much closer to the Mississippi River, the main artery of the interior of the United States, and located in a vast stretch of flat plains. The city thrived in its early decades until The Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which largely destroyed a great deal of the city's infrastructure, although luckily much of their transportation hubs remained intact, a fact most useful when it came to the rebuild.

Historical Background

Early Chicago was a frontier city with mostly wooden framed buildings, hence allowing for the devastating outcome of the fire. While the city rebuilt itself following the great fire, it was not until Chicago received the bid to host the World's Columbian Exposition that the city truly transformed. The World's Fair held in 1893 to celebrate the four hundred year anniversary of Christopher Columbus discovering the new world was the catalyst of the modernization of Chicago. For this, the city brought in Daniel Burnham and Frederick Law Olmstead to prepare the city for the momentous event. It was the visions of these two men that helped transform Chicago at the turn of the twentieth century into a truly modern city.

Both Burnham and Olmstead worked together to create the idealistic city, termed "The White City" by many, for the World's Fair and it was a glorious collection of architecture and urban planning. So much so, that Daniel Burnham was requested to redesign the entirety of the city of Chicago, which came to be known as the Burnham

Plan of 1909. The World's Fair gave people a glimpse of what neat and orderly

arrangements of public grounds and buildings could appear to be and thus served as

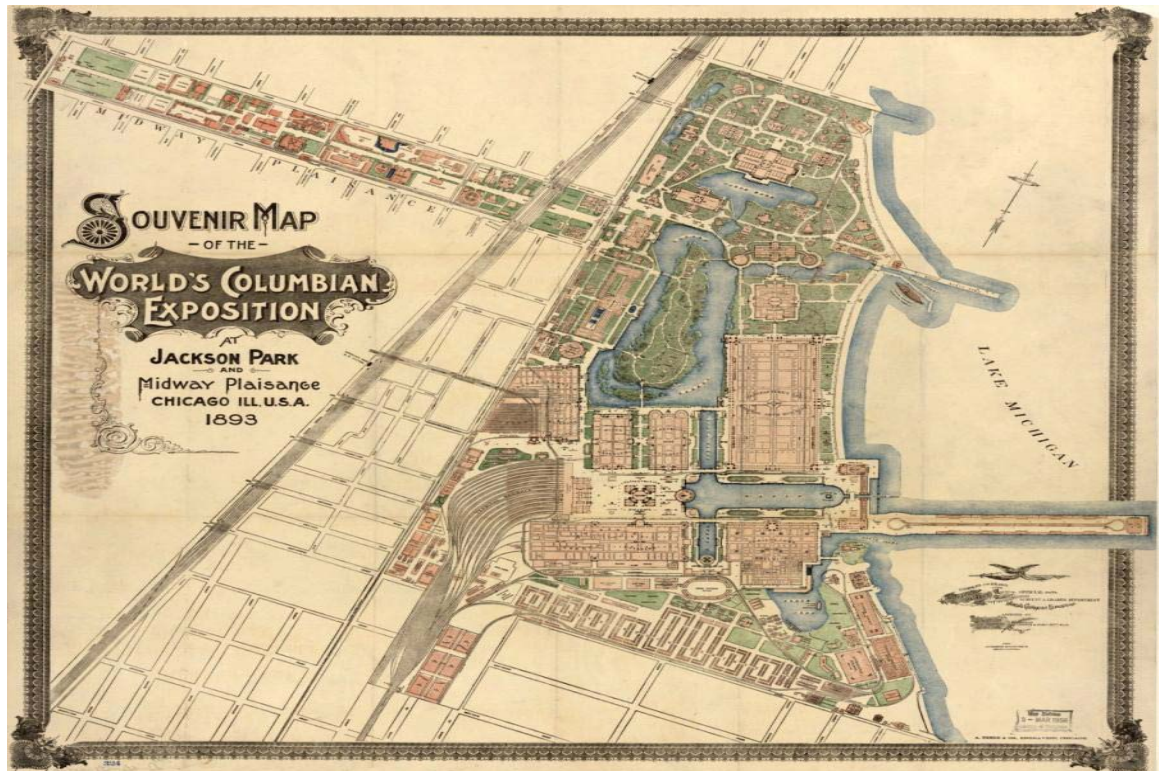inspiration for whole cities to inspire. [152] (See Figure 4)

Figure 4: Map of The World's Fair in 1893 (Courtesy of US Archives)

While the cost to redesign a city such as The White City would be entirely too high for a

city to sustain for the entirety of its bounds, it served as a goal to aim for and one that

Burnham most certainly used when putting together his redesign of Chicago.

The intent with the Burnham Plan was to make cities more orderly, beautiful, and

humane without having all the cogs that make them run efficiently bog it down in grime

and grit.[153] Burnham was a member of the Progressive Movement, a movement that

brought modernity and a keen eye to aesthetics. In one part of the Progressive platform,

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[152] Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett, *Plan of Chicago* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 4.
[153] Carl Smith, *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 17.

the City Beautiful movement, "its proponents called for transforming the urban environment…into what they believed was a more beautiful, unified and efficient arrangement of its parts, all interconnected with handsomely landscaped streets and boulevards. Gracing this noble cityscape would be great public architecture, including if at all possible an imposing civic center."[154] The City Beautiful Movement "concentrated on reshaping street patterns to provide grand boulevards, grandiose public plazas, and imposing civic centers. At their silliest, the plans stressed the desirability of lining the grand boulevards with ornamental wrought-iron lampposts, scenic gardens, and having flower baskets." It was a belief that an attractive, inviting environment would foster civic loyalty.[155] As mentioned before, Chicago housed one of the fastest urban growths ever and because of this, there had been not one, but many different plans for the city. Similarly, a connection it holds with Cleveland, another Midwestern city, is the plans always focused on successful business.

If one could draw a positive out of the Great Chicago Fire, it helped provide greater motivation to find improvement in building construction. A city ordinance was passed following the rebuild that no building in downtown could be built with wood, an early fireproof measurement.[156] This ruling led to innovative building construction that used load-bearing walls of brick and steel to build taller buildings, giving birth to skyscrapers. Chicago became the perfect launching pad for this new building style, one that gave the city its true charismatic personality. This new construction invention

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[154] Smith, *Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City*, 15.
[155] Stanley K. Schultz, *Constructing Urban Culture: American Cities and City Planning, 1800-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 212.
[156] Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade, *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 118.

allowed maximizing the land by building upward, and in so doing greatly enlarged usable space in the city's skyline.

The rhetoric used in Chicago's redesign plan has the unique position of combining the rhetorical tools seen in the previous cities covered here. Burnham's writing very much appeared in a narrative form but contained important imperatives within its content. He paid attention to not only economical issues but did so without sacrificing aesthetic concerns for the city. For being the content that launched the field of urban planning, Burnham's treatise for the redesign of Chicago contained all the things needed to design a successful city.

<div align="center">Design Plans</div>

What Daniel Burnham essentially accomplished with his Plan of Chicago in 1909 was to establish a new field of study, urban planning. He recognized that American cities had changed since their early years and were now a place of industry and traffic and so for a city to be successful these issues must be understood by the designer. Burnham introduced his plan acknowledging these very issues. The introduction read, "it should be remembered that the purpose has not been to invent novel problems for solutions, but to take up the pressing needs of today, and to find the best methods of meeting those requirements, carrying each particular problem to its ultimate conclusion as a component part of a great entity—well ordered, convenient, and unified city."[157] What was most impressive about Burnham's design was its ability to address the immediacy of the situation but at the same time hold the future in high regard. The plan was still being used by the city of Chicago for the next half century.[158] What he achieved was the ability to

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[157] Mayer and Wade, *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis*, 276.
[158] Mayer and Wade, *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis*, 278.

perceive modernity and, with it, the view of a city as an organism made up of a vast

number of interrelated parts that must all be joined for an efficient, practical, beautiful

city.[159]

What truly makes Burnham's plan exceptional is that the first part of it is prose

explaining all that is the city of Chicago. Discussion of its parks, boulevards, public

space, and buildings were all detailed, leading one to believe the Burnham knew all about

Chicago and what the city stood for, meaning he could accurately do the city justice when

he helped to redesign it.

> Chicago, in common with other great cities, realizes that the time has come to
> bring order out of the chaos incident to rapid growth, and especially to the influx
> out people of many nationalities without common traditions or habits of life.
> Among the various instrumentalities designed to accomplish this result, a plan for
> a well-ordered and convenient city is seen to be indispensable.[160]

What immediately separates Burnham's plan compared to the writing of the three

previous cities discussed is the plan went beyond just deciding what to put here and there.

Burnham's plan discussed all various aspects of the city, almost like a complete manual

on how to design the city so it operates at peak function. As an established city,

Chicagoans carried a sense of pride for their home, which carried over into the plans to

make sure the redesign was worthy of the city's spirit.[161] Similarly, as seen in both

Philadelphia and Savannah, great inspiration came from ancient design techniques for

Chicago's redesign. Burnham expressed wonderment for the designs of ancient cities of

Greece and Rome but hearkened a particular love for Paris and the redesign it went

through under Louis XIV in the seventeenth century. To Burnham, that was when city

design became a field in earnest, when men truly sought to coax the most beautiful and

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[159] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 5.
[160] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 10.
[161] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 8.

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functional design out of their city. There is even homage paid to L'Enfant's plan for Washington D.C., for his brilliant use of diagonals, a city design tool noted in Cleveland from Chapter 3.[162] Burnham absorbed ideas from all these great cities and was able to produce a successful code of conduct to produce a beloved city. The hybrid solution he came up with looked like this,

> That the way to true greatness and continued prosperity lies in making the city convenient and healthful for the ever-increasing numbers of its citizens; that civic beauty satisfies a craving of human nature…that the orderly arrangement of find buildings and monuments brings fame and wealth to the city; and that the cities which truly exercise dominion rule by reason of their appeal to the higher emotions of the human mind.[163]

It was the logic that Burnham affirmed Chicago already had a great foundation for all these things; he just needed to take and mold them to make the best of the situation, location and resources.

What sets apart Burnham's Plan from the others was it was not composed as a set of directions like the previous three. As an architect, he certainly had the better pedigree over the previous city's designers Penn, Oglethorpe, and Cleaveland, but surprisingly he did not dictate intricacies as such.

> In each town plan spaces should be marked out for public schools, and each school should have about it ample playgrounds…Next to the school, the public library should have a place;…The town-hall, the engine house with its lookout tower, the police station with its court of justice, and the post-office, all naturally form a group of buildings that may be located about a common or public square, so as to form the suburban civic center.[164]

As evidenced here, Burnham's basic town plan design is stated as a suggestion with viable reasons for why it should be followed. He used a greater element of persuasion than seen before, painted a picture of an ideal city plan with his prose, which of course

[162] Smith, *Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City*, 11.
[163] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 30.
[164] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 35.

was needed since he did not hold executive power like the previous three men did when they designed Philadelphia, Savannah, and Cleveland. It should also be taken into account when we realize the previously discussed plans read purely as directions; those men did not have to convince anybody to execute their plans. As the designers, their word was respected and done without question, whereas Burnham had been hired by the city to craft a new plan, so he essentially had the job of persuading the many city advisors and public to envision his image of Chicago. It is important to note he discusses the present Chicago not at great length but he did go to great lengths to prove to the readers he understood the conditions and the city's needs so that his solutions seemed to cater to these necessities.[165]

The two prime considerations that Burnham highlights in regards to every city taking notice are far more unique then one would consider. They clearly show what qualities he highly valued and others that he sought were secondary. "The two prime considerations for every large city are, first, adequate means of circulation; and second, a sufficient park area to insure good health and good order."[166] As pointed out in the previous chapter, Cleveland's incorporation of diagonal streets was a huge utilization of a recent development city design and proved how much more flexibility in planning it allotted. "Thus is happens that no rectilinear system, the creation of diagonals produces the greatest convenience."[167] Diagonals helped to address his first concern. Meanwhile, Burnham's second major concern, the availability of greenery, was somewhat of a bigger challenge. His embrace of the park systems was once again a product of his belonging to the City Beautiful movement and his love for both form and function. The park systems

[165] Smith, *Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City*, 34.
[166] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 80.
[167] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 89.

utilized natural resources that not only enhanced the beauty of the city but also provided a healthy environment for the populace, therefore making them a cornerstone of Burnham's plans.

To address the first issue, circulation, Burnham sought to institute a road infrastructure that predated a great national movement just a few decades later. A major highway system in the United States didn't become a reality until President Eisenhower in the 1950's, but Burnham saw the importance of quick and convenient road access and in his quest to design these very things for Chicago and its surrounding suburbs created the very pattern our highway systems use to this day. "These state highways should invariably include a work-road for heavy loads, and also a pleasure drive. The two should be separated by a grassway and there should be grass plots at the sides, and not less than three rows of trees should be planted."[168] He carefully drew up a diagram of highways radiating throughout the city and traveling to the suburbs and country towns, spanning roughly forty miles from Chicago's center.

It was important to note that Burnham saw the city and country towns sharing a symbiotic relationship, where both needed each other; the country needed the city for key products and entertainment and the city needed the country for food, produce, and other locally produced necessities. He recognized the might of the city but knew it was only as strong and successful as its suburbs. He also importantly championed railway stations in most towns that are aesthetically pleasing but also practically placed in a methodical location.

The latter major consideration was one that was inherent in the city's nature. Chicago's motto —*Urbs in horto*— (a city set in a garden) was chosen since the city was

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[168] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 39.

conveniently located on a gorgeous lakefront with boundless prairie.[169] An unfortunate

after effect of Chicago's quick growth, similarly to what was seen in Cleveland, was a

struggle for the preservation of parkland. In the early years, small parks sprouted up

throughout the city but they were through the efforts of individual people, rather than the

city, and so unification never connected them. Eventually momentum was gained and a

ring of parks surrounded the city of Chicago, but once again afterwards was left alone

and the Chicago park system once again languished behind. Burnham's greatest reason

for the city's purchase of more land for park systems was the wellness of the people for

the city's success.

Burnham saw ample opportunity for a great deal of spacious land to be preserved

around the city of Chicago and he started with the land with a view, the shores of Lake

Michigan. "The Lake front by right belongs to the people. It affords their one great-

unobstructed view, stretching away to the horizon, where water and clouds seem to

meet…In its every aspect it is a living thing, delighting man's eye and refreshing his

spirit. Not a foot of its shores should be appropriated by individuals to the exclusion of

people."[170] He goes on about how to organize the shoreline, "wherever possible, the outer

shore should be a beach on which the waves may break…Except where formal treatments

are demanded, the inner shore should be a planted space."[171]

Like his architecture, Burnham sought to facilitate both form and function in the

most constructive way possible in his design plans and that idea manifested itself greatly

when it came to the design for shoreline. He wanted to preserve it to be the most pristine

shoreline possible so to service the Chicagoans. However, he also acknowledged the

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[169] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 43.
[170] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 50.
[171] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 53.

importance the lake served for shipping and other important services, so he sought a balance to preserve where possible and where industry must reside with piers. His goal was to create a uniform look to keep the lake looking majestic. Burnham's rhetoric cultivates a sense of necessity throughout but he particularly has a bend towards relationships; as he mentioned earlier the city and suburb having a symbiotic relationship, he used the same argument for the park system. "Moreover, the sweet breath of plant life so abundant in nature and so agreeable to man should give greeting to those who seek the refreshment of the parks."[172]

Perhaps, even a bigger motivator than any pristine image Burnham could create with words was the idea of money.

> Imagine this supremely beautiful parkway, with its frequent stretches of fields, playgrounds, avenues, and groves…What will it do for us in health and happiness? After it is finished will the people of means be so ready to run away and spend their money in other cities?...When this parkway shall be created, our people will stay here, and others will come to dwell among us…[173]

Of course, Burnham brought money into the argument because it was the most persuasive tool that society, and the city as a whole, understood. By beautifying the city and creating gorgeous natural spaces to make Chicago into one of the most beautiful cities in the world, Burnham ascertained that the wealthy would continue to reside there and future travelers would choose Chicago's beautiful shores as a home.

After the shoreline, next came coverage of the interior parks. For them, "the main consideration should be, first, to distribute the areas about the city as evenly as possible, so as to make large parks readily accessible to all citizens; and secondly, to select for

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[172] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 55.
[173] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 51.

improvement those localities which have the greatest charm and value as park lands."[174] It was Burnham's belief that these park systems would give Chicago ample greenery and breathing space for the city and its dwellers. He championed that this was one improvement for the city that did not require major construction, as the resources were already there; "it is by seizing on such salient features of a landscape and emphasizing their peculiar features that the charm and the dignity of the city are enhanced."[175]

The redesign did not stop there, though, as Burnham sought to address the issues of transportation as well. With so many railroad lines now in operation, there was an entanglement that was not conducive to traffic. A central depot was Burnham's solution, operated by money from all the various railroad companies; this facilitated space and saved money for the city, the people and the rail lines. "At this freight center may be the great warehouses of the city, arranged in reference to the tracks and service. These mutual relations must of necessity produce economy of handling goods, and economy of the closest sort. If the car and track service be perfected from the freight train standpoint, Chicago will have an advantage not possessed by any other trade center of the world, and her equipment will be fully equal to her destiny."[176] What can clearly be drawn out of Burnham's rhetoric is Chicago strove to be the greatest American city, perhaps even the greatest in the world, and every modification he made had to measure up to the others. This is why in every instance he felt the need to explain how his plans would help Chicago to greatly excel above the other metropolises. Whether or not Burnham himself truly possessed this competitive nature in his design or he just used it as a persuasive tool to convince the Chicago commissioners to commit to his plans we cannot be sure.

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[174] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 55.
[175] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 60.
[176] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 64.

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He also advocated the expansion of Chicago's underground tunnel system for delivering products to city businesses. It was again part of a larger effort to clean up traffic in the streets of the city, reduce noise pollution, and improve the overall health of Chicago. The significantly reduced traffic from the freight, coupled with lesser effect on the rest of the traffic, created a cleaner city and therefore healthier city.[177] Both underground and above ground streetcar systems were also requested. "The entire system of stations and street-car routes…If carried out, many times the present number of people can be handled in the center of Chicago…"[178] A further argument was this would open vital real estate for use in the Chicago downtown which would be pivotal for its growth. He also argued for several streets to be widened and even for the city to purchase many people's front yards on important thoroughfares in case future widening of the roads were necessary.

New roads were also added, mostly to accommodate increased traffic dealing with the lake and to give pedestrians safer travels on other roads due to the addition of further roads.[179] It cannot be forgotten that first and foremost Burnham was an architect and designer, which showed through his plans when he outlined the aesthetics of certain city modifications. "This roadway should be made attractive by effective planting. The trees framing the boulevard may well be of the clipped variety in order to carry out the architectural effect; and the lamps and other accessories should be designed so as to give finish and unity to the composition."[180] This road was a passion of Burnham's and he pitched the rhetoric, "This great improvement will come because it is a part of a plan

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[177] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 68.
[178] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 74.
[179] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 97.
[180] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 100.

which provides a basis of street circulation, and which will weld and unify the tree detached sides of Chicago; because it will improve facilities for commercial traffic, and as the same time preserve for the people the uninterrupted use of their greatest and most attractive highway."[181] (See Figure 5)
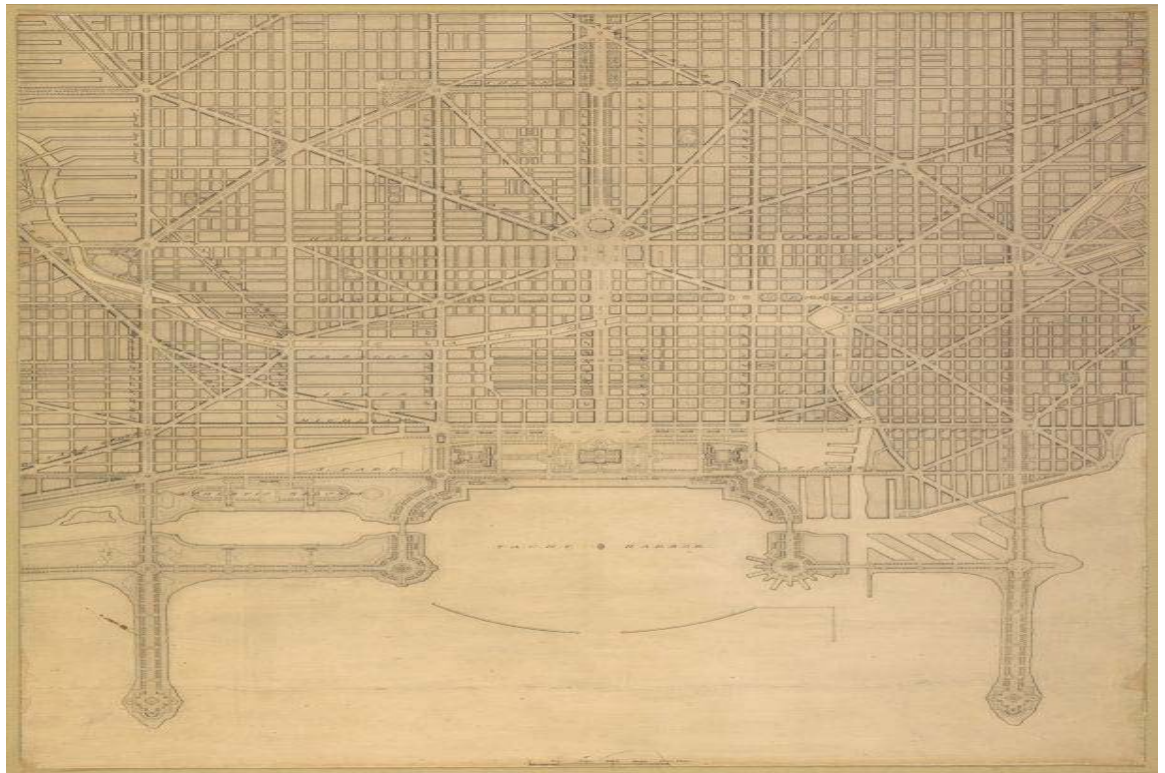

Figure 5: Burnham's Chicago Plan of 1909 (Courtesy of Art Institute of Chicago)

A civic center, a structure of city design, was of course a part of Burnham's plan as well. However, what is unique about it compared to when the previous three cities were designed was a very distinct three-part government that had arisen; federal, county, and city. City hall was the central building, flanked by the Cook County building, and the Federal building.[182] Beyond that, the inclusion of the post office, court building, and

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[181] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 107.
[182] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 117.

other government offices within the civic center gave the city a true sense of organization.

Burnham's thoroughness went above and beyond just the design as he included a financial analysis of the renovations he recommended for Chicago. He assured the populace of Chicago that if met by public approval the plan would not seriously increase financial burdens. He also conceded, "perfection of detail is not claimed, but the design as a whole is placed before the public in the confident belief that it points the way to realize civic conditions of unusual economy, convenience, and beauty."[183] It assumes a sense of responsibility and ownership for the plans detailed for the city, but it also does not assume to be the perfect plan. He qualifies his plan, as a whole, to be a way the city can realize its full potential. Once more, Burnham goes to great lengths to explain how the city's growth in real estate value can, in and of itself, more than pay for the modifications and he is most careful to place the decisions in the hands of the people.

In a closing argument of sorts, Burnham made the effort to shorthand the project to simplify it as much as he could, "The following list comprises the main items:

> *First*. The improvement of the Lakefront.
> *Second*. The creation of a system of highways outside the city.
> *Third*. The improvement of railway terminals, and the development of a complete traction system for both freight and passengers.
> *Fourth*. The acquisition of an outer park system, and of parkway circuits
> *Fifth*. The systematic arrangement of the streets and avenues within the city, in order to facilitate the movement to and from the business district.
> *Sixth*. The development of centers of intellectual life and of civic administration, so related as to give coherence and unity to the city."[184]

The final words that Burnham leaves the plan with are, "if, therefore, the plan is a good one, its adoption and realization will produce for us conditions in which business

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[183] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 119.
[184] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 121.

enterprises can be carried on with the utmost economy, and with the certainty of successful issue, while we and our children can enjoy and improve life as we cannot now do. Then our own people will become home-keepers, and the strange will seek our gates."[185]

Conclusion

One of the lasting effects of The Chicago Plan was how many cities after its publication wanted to get a hold of it for advice on their own city planning. It was viewed as a monolithic undertaking in city planning and a brilliant one at that.[186] It ushered in a new field of study altogether, city or urban planning, which became a field that every city later used to create studies on the present and future status of their city.

What we can say for sure were Burnham's plans were legendary and it was his plans and his writing that became the first example of urban planning as an official field of study. All the previous cities were of course designed and planned, but they did not include an accompanying narrative and great numbers of issues were not addressed, but left for future generations to address. Burnham sat down and set out in his Plan for Chicago to give the city of Chicago a guidebook to use to address all the issues related to the city's expansion and changes as time goes on.

He demonstrated a great deal more foresight in his planning but of course, a lot of that stemmed from the fact he was brought in with the expectations of fixing a preexisting city, whereas our previous cities were all built from scratch. "More study, not more money, is need for this work."[187] "At no period in its history has the city looked far enough ahead. The mistakes of the past should be warnings for the future. There can be

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[185] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 124.
[186] "Chicago's World Wide Influence in City Planning." *Fine Arts Journal*, 1914, 520.
[187] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 78.

no reasonable fear lest any plans that may be adopted shall prove too broad and comprehensive. That idea may be dismissed as unworthy a moment's consideration."[188] What marks Burnham's plan as the first true instance of professional city planning is the comprehensiveness of the plan. Other cities only vaguely touched on transportation issues and such, but Burnham had considered it all in his plan. "Burnham recognized that no effective planning for the city could be accomplished without drawing into the effort the human and physical resources of the entire metropolitan area."[189] What is important to note, whether or not his plans were adopted word for word, his treatment of the city planning was revolutionary. It brought a humanistic approach and turned the city into a living organism that required attention far beyond location.

[188] Burnham and Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, 80.
[189] John W. Reps, "Burnham before Chicago: The Birth of Modern American Urban Planning." *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, 1983, 212.

Conclusion

The above examination of the four major cities, Philadelphia, Savannah, Cleveland, and Chicago, and the rhetoric used to define their constructions produced a great deal of material and truly helped to illuminate the personalities of the American people through the years. We see quickly that economics was of course, as expected, a force behind the designs of all the cities discussed above. It was by far a much larger impact as time went on, especially in Chicago's redesign, evidence that as American society evolved, money continued to gain importance. A sense of organization and sensibility appears to be another important aspect of these cities. Examined at face value, it makes absolute sense that these issues would be carefully considered in designing a city. Visual aesthetics and preservation of greenery is another common theme seen throughout the times, but to varying degrees. In Philadelphia and Savannah, we see the preservation of green space mostly for the health of its citizens; meanwhile in Cleveland and Chicago, it took the form of not only physical health but also mental health through the citizen's abilities to take recreational breaks from the busy urban life they had grown accustomed.

Beyond those similarities, the populations of Philadelphia, Savannah, and even Cleveland to a degree were quite different from the population residing in the 20th century metropolis of Chicago. While the previous three cities were still indeed cities, they were still mostly agrarian communities, whereas Chicago was already a modern day metropolis with a myriad of jobs being done in the confines of the city. The lifestyle of Americans in the 19th and 20th century was largely different from that of the previous eras of Americans. Clevelanders and Chicagoans were largely working traditional workdays

according to allotted hours demanded by their employers, whereas the citizens of Philadelphia and Savannah, from what we can gather, worked their trades on largely their own designated times.

It would be almost too simplistic to visualize the changing American city dweller from Philadelphia to Chicago but the best image would be to visualize a farmer being turned into a suit-wearing businessman and that is largely the transformation seen in the American cities from the 17th century to the 20th century. These assumptions can largely be made from analyzing the rhetoric discussed in the paper's four chapters. With a combination of primary and secondary sources, a clear image materializes about each of these individual cities. While each one carries a lasting legacy, perhaps Chicago's is the one that is most influential to modern day. For as discussed in Chapter 4, Burnham's Plan became the first official treatise of professional urban design, which we are very fortunate to have all the contents of his work available to read. But his project of redesigning Chicago ushered in the practice that has since been used on countless cities from coast to coast in the United States, whether in building a completely new city or redesigning an aging one. One could coin Burnham the father of the modern American city.

In closing, Americans will always value economic stability, the availability of greenery for both their mental and physical health, and the ability to clearly and easily navigate their hometowns. These are things that American society has cherished since its colonial days, evidenced by William Penn's plans for Philadelphia and things still considered important to Daniel Burnham upon his redesign of Chicago in 1909, and things that are still considered paramount to any city redesign pursued in 21st century America.

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