



# **Calvert Vaux and Touro Park: Did Calvert Vaux design the 1855 landscaping plan and the 1871 Music Stand?**

*James Alan Egan*

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Carefully analyzing photos, maps, and newspapers from the 1800's, research historian Jim Egan has concluded that Calvert Vaux created the 1855 landscape design for Touro Park in Newport, Rhode Island. Egan feels Calvert Vaux also designed the 1871 Music Stand, which stood near the middle of the park until the 1930's. Who was Calvert Vaux? He was a noted building architect who designed mansions like Beaulieu and Beechwood along Bellevue Avenue. But Vaux was even more famous as a landscape architect. Along with Frederick Law Olmstead, he designed Central Park in Manhattan, Prospect Park in Brooklyn, and numerous parks across the Northeast. A breezy writing style and copious graphics (over 500 photos and illustrations) make this a fun read. Along the way, you'll learn a thing or two about astronomy, the history of riddling, and architectural philosophy (the great rivalry between naturalists and monumentalists). Egan's book reads like a detective novel, yet all of his conclusions are based on well-documented historical research. Around 1900, fill was hauled in to Touro Park. New walkways were made in the straight X-shaped pattern we see today. But the original serpentine walkways still exist, about a foot under the grass. Egan feels it would be exciting to bring back the original walkway design and make an exact reproduction of the original Music Stand!

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