



Brooklyn *in the* Civil War



Unit: Daily Life

Lesson 4.3: *The Man Who Made Parks: The Story of Parkbuilder Frederick Law Olmsted* by Frieda Wishinsky (Tundra Books, 1999)

Aim: To learn about life in New York in the mid-19th century, Frederick Law Olmsted, and the creation of Central Park.

Objective: Students listen to a picture book biography of Frederick Law Olmsted and learn about him, his times, and his vision.

Materials:

1. *The Man Who Made Parks: The Story of Parkbuilder Frederick Law Olmsted* by Frieda Wishinsky (Tundra Books, 1999)

Procedure:

1. Tell students you are about to read a picture book biography of Frederick Law Olmsted, who helped create Central Park in the 1850s. Ric Burns describes the New York of this era as a “congested wasteland of factories, warehouses, and tenements.” The city had high hopes for a park where all classes of people from all backgrounds could mingle and assimilate.
2. Ask students to think about a park they know, either near their house or elsewhere. Have them describe the features of the park as well as what they like best about it in a short writing piece. Also include: Who goes to the park? Why? What do they do there? Share with class.
3. Before reading the story, take a picture walk through the pages. Look for clues about what life was like in the mid-19th century in New York. How did people dress? How did they live? Describe the apartment and who lived there. What type of transportation did they use? While listening to the story, think about what professions people had in those days. What inspired Olmsted to become a parkbuilder? What did he hope to accomplish by creating Central Park? What obstacles did he face and how did he overcome them?