



# The Park and the People: A History of Central Park

By Roy Rosenzweig, Elizabeth Blackmar

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This "exemplary social history" (Kirkus Reviews) is the first full-scale account of Central Park ever published. Elizabeth Blackmar and Roy Rosenzweig tell the story of Central Park's people—the merchants and landowners who launched the project; the immigrant and African-American residents who were displaced by the park; the politicians, gentlemen, and artists who disputed its design and operation; the German gardeners, Irish laborers, and Yankee engineers who built it; and the generations of New Yorkers for whom Central Park was their only backyard. In tracing the park's history, Blackmar and Rosenzweig give us the history of New York, and bring to life larger issues about the meaning of the word "public" in a democratic society.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

An outstanding study of Manhattan's Central Park from its 19th-century designers to its current beneficiaries. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

What took 166 tons of dynamite, six million bricks, 19,000 cubic yards of sand, 20,000 men, and \$5 million to build? If you answered New York's Central Park, give yourself a perfect grade. The same is awarded this magnificent public works history, a masterpiece combining the story of the park, the history of New York, city and state politics, and the people of the city. Central Park was conceived in the 1840s, built in the depression era of 1857, and renovated during the Great Depression. The authors have exhausted primary and secondary sources to produce this definitive work, which surpasses an earlier photographic history, *Circle of Seasons*. From the work of park designers Frederic Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux to New Deal park commissioner Robert Moses to the administration of Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, the volume is a rare combination of scholarship and readable text. The emphasis is on the 19th century and the park's formative decades, including design, property acquisition, and the men whose labor created the world's best-known park. Ignoring neither the vested interests of the propertied class who stood to benefit from the park nor the fear of crime in Central Park, Rosenzweig and Blackmar produce a model history--not just of the park but of the city and people who turn to it for amusement, recreation, relaxation, and more.

-*Boyd Childress, Auburn Univ. Lib., Ala.*

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Review

"Original and provocative. . . . A deeply felt celebration of the role of public space."?Robert Fishman, *New York Times Book Review*

"Ambitious and adventurous. . . . A surprising and deeply social account of the park's contentious past. A powerful historical resource for thinking about the shape American public spaces have taken."?Susan G. Davis, *The Nation*

"Prodigiously researched, eloquent. An outstanding study of the evolution of Manhattan's Central Park."?Publishers Weekly (starred review)

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