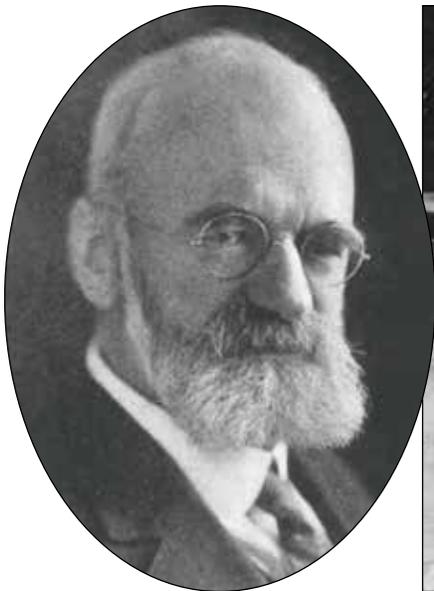


Newsletter

October 2018

Planning the Future Greater Birmingham, 100 Years Ago



Warren H. Manning, n.d. Photograph courtesy of University of Massachusetts at Lowell, Center for Lowell History.



George B. Ward, Birmingham City Commission President, n.d. Photograph by J. F. Knox, courtesy Birmingham, Ala. Public Library Archives.

FORWARD-LOOKING BIRMINGHAM CITY COMMISSION President George B. Ward hired Warren H. Manning of Massachusetts, a gifted and visionary “landscape designer” (as he called himself) and “environmental planner” (as he is called today), to conceptualize how Birmingham might best continue to grow. At this time, the fast-growing industrial center was the fourth largest city in the South. Ward recruited George Gordon Crawford, then president of the region’s largest industrial corporation, TCI, the southern subsidiary of U.S. Steel, to chair the plan. Crawford also hired Manning to develop recreational amenities for TCI workers and a large property for himself.

Manning’s plan, first presented in 1916 and subsequently published by subscription in 1919 as *Warren H. Manning’s City Plan of Birmingham*, presents a vision of a great industrial city developed in harmony with its natural resources. (The plan is a regional one based on natural resources, not political jurisdictions.) The area’s seven creeks are anticipated to continue to flood and are to be developed with parkways and parks. Industry is to be located in the wide Jones and Pinson Valleys, and residential areas are to be situated on high ground, above flood levels.

Principles articulated in Manning’s plan—and in a later plan built on this document, the Olmsted Brothers’ *A Park System for Birmingham* of 1925—would continue to guide both civic leaders and developers, as well as public policy, until the post-World War II era. Even later, city planners still sought to build a tunnel through Red Mountain as recommended in the plan. One newspaper report actually mentioned that the tunnel, not today’s Red Mountain Cut, would be built. The fake-news story, published on Halloween, elicited great excitement!

In the estimation of leading landscape architectural historian Al Fein of Harvard, Manning’s 1919 plan is of national significance. In our research for the forthcoming *Shades Creek* book, we realized how influential the Manning plan has been in shaping our region.

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Society Calendar

OCTOBER 13, 10:30–11:30 A.M.

Second Saturdays at Sloss
Walks and Talks in Grandmother’s Garden
10 32nd Street North

Solomon’s Seal: Appalachia’s Secret Soother

Herbalist Antonia Viteri will demonstrate making an herbal oil infusion from this herb that grows profusely in the Birmingham area and whose recorded healing qualities date back 3,000 years.

OCTOBER 22, 5 P.M.

Talks, Tours, and Tastings

Meet at the **Theodore**, 3211 2nd Avenue South, to tour the former Swann Chemical Company Laboratory, soon to reopen as an event venue, and the **Back Forty** brewery and restaurant in the recently renovated Sloss Docks, 3201 First Avenue North, for a tour and tasting followed by a Dutch-treat supper. Come meet our new neighbors!

NOVEMBER 5–9

The 2018 members’ publication, *Warren H. Manning’s City Plan of Birmingham*, will be mailed (priority) to members paid for 2018. Please let us know if you DO NOT receive your book by calling (205) 251-1880 or emailing bhistorical@gmail.com.

NOVEMBER 10, 10:30–11:30 A.M.

Second Saturdays at Sloss
Walks and Talks in Grandmother’s Garden
10 32nd Street North

Elderberries: Esteemed Remedy

Herbalist Antonia Viteri will demonstrate how to make elderberry syrup, a tasty and healthy concoction considered particularly beneficial at the approach of the coughs, colds, and flu season, from berries in our garden.

Continued from page 1

Birmingham Historical Society is pleased to reprint the original document with its many maps, drawings, and tables. Mary Beth Newbill, head of Birmingham Public Library's Tutwiler Collection of Southern History, graciously made available an original letter-pressed copy of the plan for scanning and printing. BPL's Paul Boncella expertly disassembled and reassembled the document,

and Arthur Henley and associates at Birmingham Printing and Publishing, Inc., faithfully reproduced it under the guidance of Scott Fuller and Katie Tipton.

Please dip into our reprint, the Society's 2018 members' publication, and consider how much of what is good in our city and region derives from this plan and the efforts of a generation of civic leaders who sought to implement it.

Shades Creek Book Inching to Press

THAT WHICH TOM CARRUTHERS COMMISSIONED three years ago is taking shape! Photographs have been made, many knowledgeable people interviewed, numerous field explorations undertaken, many archival records surveyed, untold numbers of emails sent and received, essays turned in, publication pages designed, and drafts released to many readers who are commenting, critiquing, and helping to fact-check, rewrite, and edit the 216 pages.

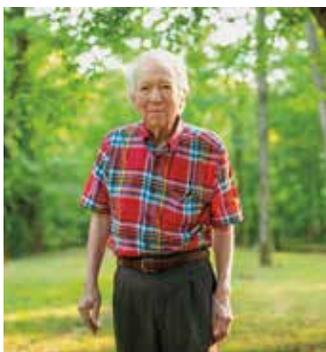
There is no subtitle yet, but the publication date is set, and Shades Creek—that special place in which many played as children—shall have 330 million years of its story told. The biologist, theorist, naturalist, and author E. O. Wilson, a Birmingham native, has penned a transcendental preface that will turn your head and help you to understand the natural resource that runs, largely unnoticed, in our midst.

The forthcoming Shades Creek book, which will be the Birmingham Historical Society members' publication for 2019, will be released at the Society's annual meeting on Monday, February 25, at 7:00 p.m. at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. (Please be thinking about making and entering your family's favorite cake—of any era this year, but with a great story of your family tradition in serving it—in the cake-baking contest that afternoon.)

The Shades Creek project team includes the individuals pictured below. Not shown are archeologist Bruce Bizzocco, Shades Creek authority James Lowery, and designer Scott Fuller. Readers have also included Michelle Blackwood, Henry Hughes, and Elberta Reid.



Researchers, mapmakers, writers, and editors, *left to right*, Brian Rushing, Birgit Kibelka, Marjorie White, Carol Slaughter, Julius Linn Jr., Katie Tipton, and Judy Jones. HUNTER NICHOLS, 2018.



Tom Carruthers. HUNTER NICHOLS, 2018.



Hunter Nichols, canoeing the creek south of I-459. HUNTER NICHOLS, 2017.



Abraham Odrezin using his drone to locate and photograph the creek's headwaters near Sadler's Gap. ABRAHAM ODREZIN, 2016.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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NOVEMBER 5, 1942
75 YEARS
NOVEMBER 5, 2017

BIRMINGHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY
