

## **Forest Hill: A National Imprint**

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At Forest Hill, both John D. Rockefeller, Sr. and Jr. exhibited a deep appreciation for the natural environment and a keen sensitivity to landscape design. The 650 acre estate in Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland was the Rockefeller's first country home. There, father and son experimented with a variety of innovative landscape design concepts including terraced trails which followed the natural topography, rough hewn bridges which were dressed to mirror the natural stone outcroppings, meandering pathways with sweeping turns around which were found unexpected vistas, and interpretive trails which ran through the most exceptional natural areas and offered family members and visitors an opportunity to discover the natural history of the land.

Many of the landscape design features first developed at Forest Hill served as prototypes for subsequent Rockefeller-sponsored and directed landscape design efforts at Acadia National Park in Maine, Palisades Park, and Pocantico Hills in New York.

The love of trees and natural lands, initially passed from father to son at Forest Hill also led directly to the tremendous conservation efforts of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. His desire to save the best natural lands for public enjoyment led to his purchase and donation to the federal government of much of the areas which are now The Great Smoky Mountains, Shenandoah, Grand Tetons and Redwood National Parks.

In the early 1900's, the Rockefellers began to develop Pocantico Hills, a new 3,000-acre country estate overlooking the Hudson River, 30 miles north of New York City. Around 1910, it replaced Forest Hill as their primary residence. At Pocantico Hills, the landscape skills and interests which were developed at Forest Hill were developed on a much grander scale. Over 55 miles of carriage roads were laid out and built by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. These roads were designed in the same manner and served the same purposes as those which had been previously built at Forest Hill. In addition, at Pocantico Hills, all of the roads were open to the general public from the day they were built.