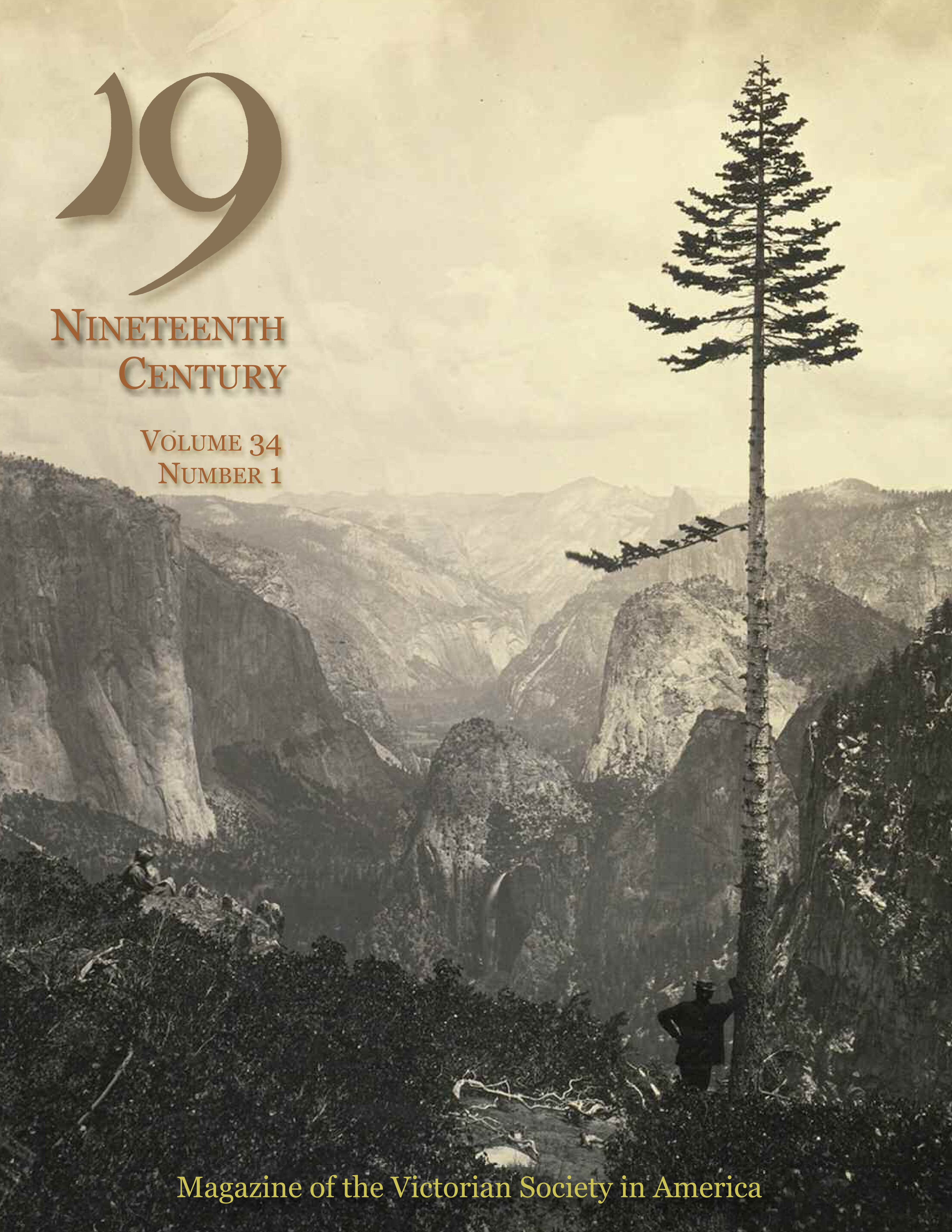

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Cover: Charles L. Weed, *Yo-Semite Valley, from the Mariposa Trail,* 1864.

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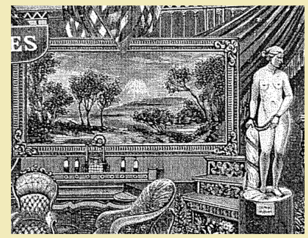
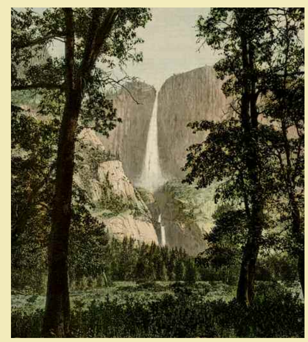




Departments

Earliest known photograph of the Texas Governor's Mansion, c. 1870. Friends of the Governor's Mansion, Austin.

Almost Lost

The Texas Governor's Mansion

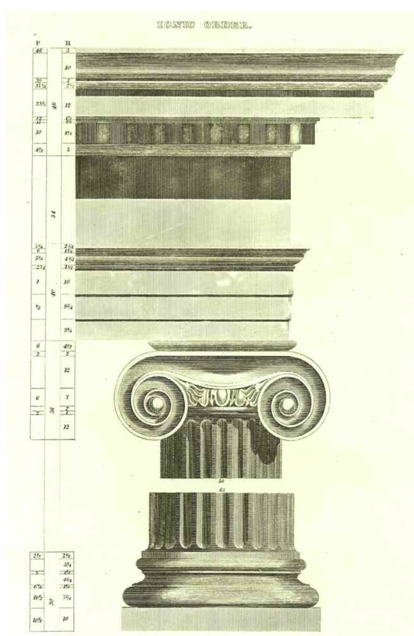
JANE KAROTKIN

During the early hours of June 8, 2008, an arsonist scaled two fences and lobbed a "Molotov cocktail" at the front door of the Governor's Mansion in Austin, Texas. From the initial fire on its front porch, the building burned between the first and second floors, as well as under the roof, from the front to the back. By the time the fire department arrived, the fire was burning so intensely that it was difficult to bring under control, and many feared that the result would be a total loss of the historic structure. After a long battle the fire was finally extinguished, but the extensive damage could not be assessed by engineers for several days due to the arson investigation and safety concerns. Would it be possible to save the edifice? Or would Texas have to provide a new home for the governor, breaking a fifteen decade tradition?

The city of Austin, fourth capital of the independent Republic of Texas (1836-1846), developed from the small settlement of Waterloo on the Colorado River. Designated as the seat of government by President Mirabeau B. Lamar in 1839, the city plan is credited to Edwin Waller. The dominant feature of the plan is the large Capitol Square placed on a rise above the Colorado River. The upper half block just east of that square was designated for the "President's House" and became the site of a simple two story residence that burned in 1847.[1] Until the completion of the Governor's Mansion in 1856, the chief executives of Texas generally occupied rented quarters while in Austin, which had grown to a population of about 3,000 in the 1850s.

By 1854, Texas had been a state for eight years and was prosperous enough to consider building a grand house for the governor. The legislature appropriated $17,000 for a new governor's residence, $14,500 for the building and $2,500 for furnishings. It also appointed three commissioners on February 11, 1854, "to furnish a plan and superintend the erection of a suitable residence and outbuildings for the Governor of the State."[2] Governor E. M. Pease was one of the commissioners, along with the state treasurer and the comptroller. One of their most important acts was to select a different site for the new mansion than had been designated on the 1839 plan. Block 125, immediately southwest of Capitol Square, was acquired by purchasing several lots at a total cost of $3,500.[3] According to the commissioners,

> We think it proper here to state that if the house had been built on the half block designated by law there would have been no sufficient room for gardens, yards and shrubbery, and that the house would have had to front so that it could never have been a comfortable and pleasant residence in this climate, during the warm weather. In changing the location we acted as we would have done if building such a house for ourselves individually.[4]



Detail with design elements from Asher Benjamin's *The Practice of Architecture*, 1851.

Around this time, all three commissioners lived in houses built by Abner Cook, the man who would be responsible for the construction of Governor's Mansion. Cook generally sited these houses facing east to catch the prevailing breeze, an advantage during the hot Texas summers.

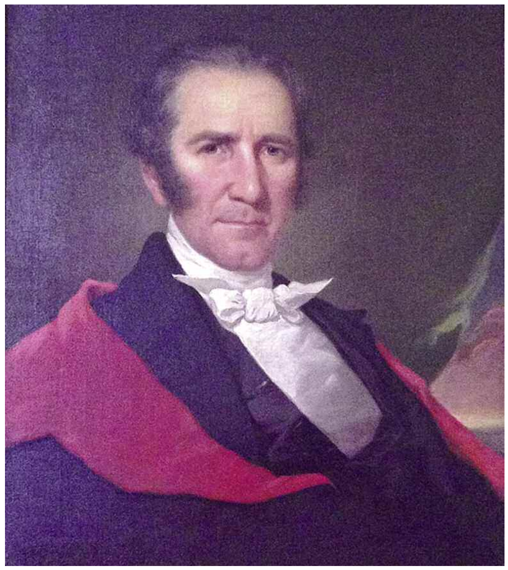
Abner Cook was born in 1814 in Rowan County, North Carolina, and probably apprenticed with a master builder in Salisbury.[5] After working in Macon, Georgia, possibly on the Greek Revival style Georgia Female College, Cook moved to Nashville, Tennessee, in 1837.[6] There he would have seen a number of buildings in the Greek Revival style. There are similarities between the houses he built in Texas in the 1850s and the Hermitage, home of

Andrew Jackson near Nashville. After a fire in 1834, President Jackson had the house rebuilt in Greek Revival style with six two story columns across the front. The symmetrical wings on the Hermitage are reminiscent of the original proposal by Cook to build the Governor's Mansion with two wings, which were eliminated to reduce the cost.

Cook was the low bidder on the Mansion project by offering to pay the cost of the drawings for the building which were created by Richard Payne. Little is known about Payne, and his drawings do not survive. But Cook seems to have relied on books like Asher Benjamin's *Practice of Architecture* and Minard Lafever's *Beauties of Modern Architecture* for design elements such as the shouldered architraves around doors and windows. The six Ionic columns across the façade are 29 feet high and follow the kind of proportions shown in the pattern books of the time. The X-and-stick pattern of the front balustrade is a motif used by Cook on several other Austin houses.

The plan of the house is a central hall on first and second floors with two rooms on each side. By orienting the front façade to the east, Cook took advantage of the prevailing breeze to ventilate the house. High ceilings, 16 feet on the first floor and 13 feet on the second floor, added to the grand scale of the rooms. A partial basement and two story kitchen ell at the back completed the structure, providing about 6,000 square feet of space. Because amenities like an indoor toilet, running water and gas lights were not added until the 1870s, outbuildings included a privy. The site, about two acres, also had a stable and a kitchen garden maintained by Lucadia Pease while First Lady from 1856 to 1857. Two cisterns at the back of the house provided water, described as "excellent" by Governor Pease.[7]

Materials included buff colored brick from clay pits on Texas's Colorado River, which runs through Austin. Pine from a nearby county provided lumber for framing and floors. Because of the limited funds, the interior plaster walls were left without paint or wallpaper, and woodwork was painted white. The soft brick was also painted white after a few decades to prevent it from deteriorating, and the exterior has been painted ever since.



Top: Martin Johnson Heade, *Sam Houston*, c. 1846. Friends of the Governor's Mansion, Austin.
Bottom: Vase, c. 1810. Gift of Ima Hogg, 1943. Photo by Eric Beggs.

Governor Pease spent his first night in the Mansion on June 10, 1856.[8] In August, while his wife was away visiting relatives, he hosted the first party in the Mansion by inviting "his friends and the public" to the Executive Residence. Around 500 guests attended. Refreshments included Mrs. Pease's preserves and brandied fruit, cakes and other food purchased by the governor for $121.80 according to a surviving receipt. Writing to his wife a few days after the party, Governor Pease reported that the servants were still cleaning up from the festivities.[9]

Well-known residents during the 19th century include Virginia-born Sam Houston, the hero of the battle of San Jacinto that won Texas independence from Mexico in 1836. Twice president of the Republic of Texas and a senator from Texas after statehood, Houston is the only person in United States history to have served as the governor of two states. He was governor of Tennessee before his fateful move to Texas in 1832. Houston moved his family, wife Margaret and seven children, into the Mansion in 1859. A hotly debated appropriation by the legislature provided $2,500 for furnishings for the Mansion, and one of the purchases was a bed for governor that remains in the house. The Houstons' eighth child was delivered in this bed, the first child born in the Governor's Mansion. The family also had the bedrooms on the north side of the second floor divided to provide more private spaces for their large family. The governor's term was cut short when Texas voted to secede. Sam Houston refused to sign a loyalty oath to the Confederacy and the office of governor was declared vacant. By mid-March of 1861, the family was packing their belongings and by the end of the month left the Mansion, and Austin, for good.[10]

James Stephen Hogg, the first native-born Texas governor, held office from 1891 to 1895. His daughter, Ima Hogg, became a great collector of American decorative arts whose home, Bayou Bend, and its contents, are now part of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Miss Hogg had fond memories of

(L to R): Double parlors, showing the collection and decoration from the 1979-82 restoration project. Front entry hall. Photos by Eric Beggs.

life in the Mansion with her brothers and a lively menagerie of pets including a parrot that called the governor "Papa." Miss Hogg became a generous benefactor to the Mansion, donating furniture and a pair of Old Paris porcelain vases, and serving as an advisor to the collection. The Governor's Memento Collection displayed in the Mansion includes the hymnal used by the Hogg family during their residency.

The early decades of the 20th century brought a new decorative scheme in the double parlors with a deep plaster cove molding at the ceiling and elaborate mantels with mirrors above. A carriage house replaced the old stable around 1900. In 1914, a new addition on the west side of the building replaced the old back porch and kitchen ell with a two story addition, creating a family dining room at the back of the house, more family space on the second floor, and an updated kitchen. The size of the structure increased to about 9,118 square feet. During the 1950s, the building got a new roof and air conditioning. First Lady Nellie Connally organized a major grounds project while living in the Mansion from 1963 to 1969. A brick terrace and fountain were added to the southwest area of the site, along with a rose garden and flower beds.[11]

By 1979, 34 families had occupied the Mansion over a dozen decades. Newly elected Governor William P. Clements, Jr., and his wife Rita Crocker Clements found the Mansion in need of a major restoration. After a study committee recommended keeping the building as the executive residence, Governor and Mrs. Clements urged the state legislature to fund the necessary construction. After an appropriation of $1 million for the project passed, the First Lady and Governor formed Friends of the Governor's Mansion to raise private funds to refurbish the interiors, catalog and conserve treasures like Sam Houston's bed and Stephen F. Austin's desk, and acquire a museum-quality collection of early 19th century American decorative arts and Texas paintings to fully furnish the home. They raised over $3 million, and with the advice of David B. Warren, then Director of the Bayou Bend Collection in Houston, and other professionals, a furnishing and decorative plan was created and completed.

In 1982, the beautifully restored and furnished Mansion was opened, featuring new pine floors from reclaimed wood, as well as elegant draperies in period style fabrics, custom rugs and furniture made in the major cities of the United States between 1800 and 1825. Friends of the Governor's Mansion continues 35 years later to curate and maintain the collections, provide education programs about the house and its history, and beautify the gardens.

In 2007, an assessment of the original windows in the 1856 part of the building indicated that much of the original material was deteriorating. Examination of other parts of the Mansion, including mechanical systems, revealed the need for new equipment and extensive deferred maintenance work in many areas of the building. Governor and Mrs. Rick Perry agreed to move out of the Mansion for an estimated period of 15 to 18 months while the windows were restored and other important work on the building proceeded, including installation of a fire suppression system. In October 2007, the family relocated to a temporary residence and all of the contents of the building were removed so the maintenance project could begin. Objects designated as part of the historic Mansion Collection mostly went into storage, with a few paintings loaned to the Capitol and some pieces used to furnish the governor's temporary residence. Eventually, even the original pine doors were removed to protect them, and the first group of windows was sent to a company in Lubbock, Texas, for restoration. This was the situation, then, when the arsonist struck in 2008: happily, the house was unoccupied and empty of its furnishings.

More than a hundred fire fighters and thousands of gallons of water fought the intense fire. Because of the danger inside the building, the Austin Fire Department had to work from outside the Mansion for nearly ten hours to control the fire. Clouds of smoke filled the blocks around the nearby Capitol, and water from the fire hoses filled the street in front of the Mansion. The governor's deputy press secretary described the damage as "bordering on catastrophic."[12]

Although the 1950s steel roof twisted from the heat, it held the old masonry walls together. The original staircase and much of the woodwork in the 1856 block had been covered with duct board before the fire, which helped protect them from much of the damage from flames, water and debris. Despite a partial collapse of the roof and extensive destruction, the maintenance team of architects, engineers, preservationists and construction managers felt that the Mansion could be restored. Thus the maintenance project became a restoration project of the burned building, headed by the State Preservation Board, the agency that had restored the State Capitol ten years earlier and continues to maintain it. Project Manager Dealey Herndon, who led the Capitol project, directed the planning and execution of the complex task to return the Mansion to its purpose as the residence of the Texas governors. Previous governors and first family members supported the effort to rebuild their former home.

First Lady Anita Perry led the Texas Governor's Mansion Restoration Fund which raised $3.5 million, funds that paid for specialist work to provide the highest possible standards for the restoration and for an addition to the back of the building. The addition allowed the creation of handicapped accessible restrooms in the public area of the first floor and the construction of a much improved back staircase to replace the 1914 one. Two bedrooms and a bathroom in the addition greatly increased the functionality of the private quarters, where only two bedrooms existed prior to 2008. The heavily damaged Ionic columns on the front were restored in place, and as much original fabric was saved as possible, a goal throughout the project. On the entablature, old-growth wood was used where the historic material was unusable. The state provided $21.5 million for the Mansion restoration, and many legislators followed the progress with great interest over the four years from fire to finish.

Damage to the building exposed areas whose functions had not been completely understood. During work on the front window openings, architects confirmed that the large original sashes were designed to rise into pockets in the wall, allowing people to walk between the front porch and the rooms adjacent, a feature found in other homes of the period. Removal of the damaged pine floors revealed the old random-width subfloor, inspiring a change to boards of four or five different widths for the new floors for historical accuracy. Site work along the perimeter of the grounds revealed the old carriage step carved with "Mansion" which is now proudly displayed next to the new visitor entrance.

Planning meetings with the curator of Friends of the Governor's Mansion, the Texas Historical Commission, the Mansion staff, and the State Preservation Board resulted in the decision to restore the rooms displaying the historic collections to their pre-fire appearance. Paint colors were carefully matched to samples removed before the fire and reclaimed pine replaced damaged floors, stained as before. In the summer of 2012 the collections returned to the building along with rugs, draperies and freshly refurbished grain-painted doors. Changes from the pre-fire building include a new roof and new HVAC, plumbing and electrical systems. Governor Perry encouraged energy efficiency throughout the building, and LEED certification was a goal.

(L to R): The central staircase after the fire. The Mansion shortly after the fire in June, 2008. Courtesy of the Office of the Governor.

The restored Texas Governor's Mansion, 2013. Courtesy of the Office of the Governor.

The grounds, which had suffered from being a construction site during the project, were refurbished with new grass and other plantings, a reconfigured kitchen garden, and trees to replace some lost from fire damage. The Connally terrace area, now more than 50 years old, was retained and continues to be the highlight of the grounds.

Since public tours resumed in April 2013, thousands of visitors have seen the transformation of the Mansion from the terribly damaged building that made national news in June 2008 to a beautiful and functional home to serve the Texas governors and their families for generations to come.

According to noted architectural historian William Seale,

> A small number of buildings in the United States are symbolic of time broader than the life of one man or family and represent more than one event... The Texas Governor's Mansion is among the select few... we know that even as we contemplate history, history is being made every day in that same house.[13]

Notes

1. Kenneth Hafertepe, *Abner Cook: Master Builder on the Texas Frontier* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1992), 74.
2. Jean Houston Daniel, Price Daniel and Dorothy Blodgett, *The Texas Governor's Mansion* (Austin: Texas State Archives and Library, 1984), 303. "The Report of the Commissioners to the Legislature" of 1856, transcribed in Appendix B, is one of the most important primary documents on the planning and construction of the Mansion.
3. Ibid., 305.
4. Ibid.
5. Hafertepe, 7.
6. Ibid., 17.
7. Katherine Hart and Elizabeth Kemp, ed., *Lucadia Pease and the Governor, Letters 1850-1857* (Austin: The Encino Press, 1974), 258. Both cisterns were located during the 2007-2012 maintenance and restoration projects.
8. The Texas Governor's Mansion is the fourth oldest governor's residence in continuous use in the United States, and the oldest west of the Mississippi River. The older mansions are Virginia (1813), Mississippi (1842) and Illinois (1855).
9. Hart and Kemp, 292-293. Also Daniel, Daniel and Blodgett, 59.
10. James L. Haley, *Sam Houston* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 393-395.
11. Dealey Decherd Herndon, *The Governor's Mansion of Texas: A Tour of Texas' Most Historic Home* (Austin: Friends of the Governor's Mansion, 1997), 91-93. Many Texas garden clubs supported this effort to improve the grounds and the terrace still serves as an important entertaining area to this day.
12. www.nytimes.com/2008/06/09/us/09texas.html, 3-13-2014.
13. William Seale, "Report on the Texas Governor's Mansion, 1975." Copy in the files of Friends of the Governor's Mansion.

The International Exhibition building, London, 1862. The building was demolished in 1864 and replaced by the National History Museum.

American Artists in London

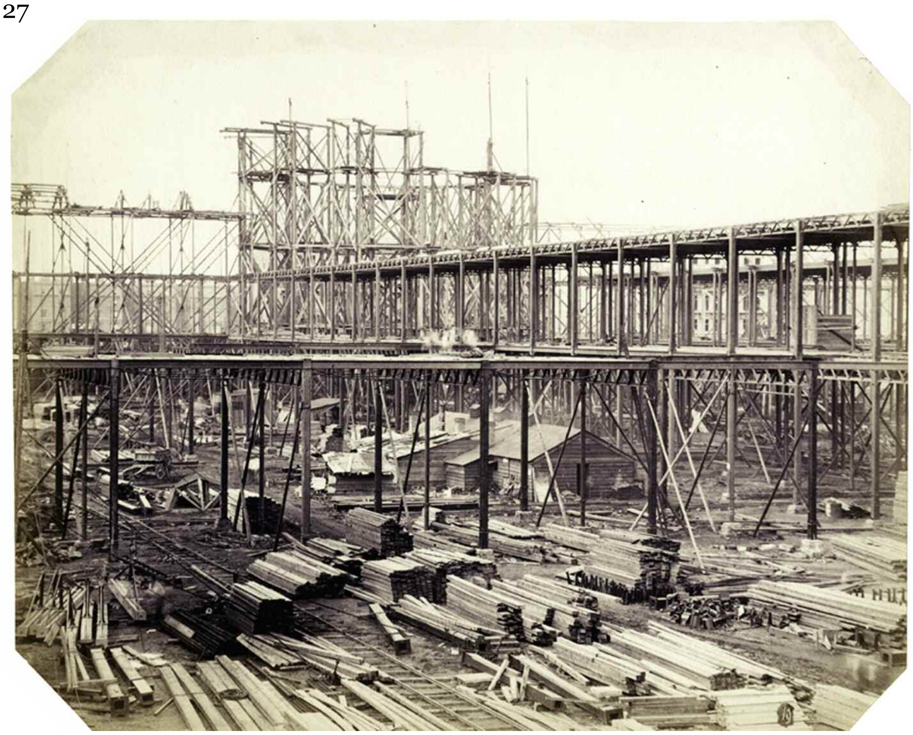
AT THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF 1862

BARBARA FINNEY

> During the second Great International Exhibition, London will form the chief attraction in the civilized world. Busy as a bee-hive, crowded as an ant-hill, it is the very center of knowledge, intelligence and industry.
>
> *The World's Guide to London in 1862 by Day and by Night*

On May 1, 1862, London's International Exhibition opened with elaborate fanfare led by the Duke of Cambridge substituting for Queen Victoria. The Queen, in mourning following the death of Prince Albert, had ordered the country's greatest pomp for the occasion and as thousands of onlookers, visiting royalty and distinguished visitors watched, horsemen paraded past the entrance. Inside the exhibition building, viewers streamed through the long nave to admire the ornate domes at either end.

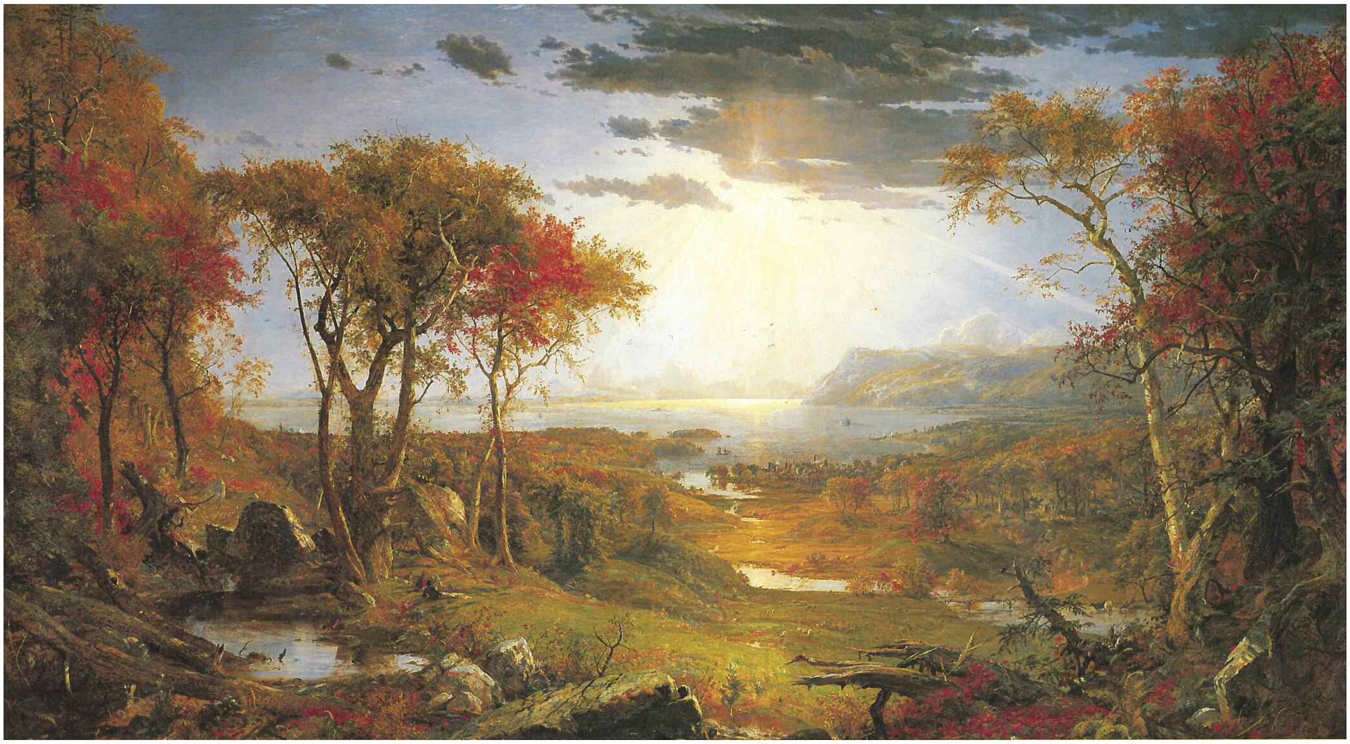
Designed by military architect Capt. Francis Fowke (1823-1865), the building occupied 27 acres adjacent to the Royal Horticultural Society. Construction had required an estimated 17,500,000 bricks, and large quantities of iron, glass, timber and stone. Jasper Cropsey, the American artist and architect, who lived only blocks from the site at 2 Kensington Gate, Hyde Park South, and no doubt followed progress closely, was surely aware of negative comparisons to the Crystal Palace designed by Joseph Paxton for London's Exhibition of 1851 a decade earlier. Fowke's structure was considered ugly – "the most worthless and vilest parody of architecture it has been our misfortune to look at," wrote *Illustrated London News*. Seconding the opinion was visiting Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881); its mere sight, he wrote, evoked a feeling of fear. In 1864 the building was torn down and replaced by the Natural History Museum.



The International Exhibition building, under construction.
The structure occupied 27 acres adjacent to the Royal Horticultural Society.

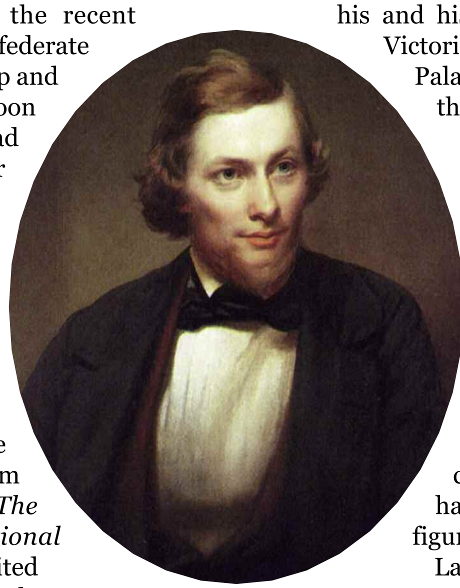
Cropsey, a London resident since 1856, played a major role in preparing America's exhibition and locating paintings to reflect recent trends in the country's art. When his appeal totaled only 21 the majority painted by resident artists or those living in Europe, he was no doubt disappointed.

The Official Catalogue of the Fine Art Department suggested a possibility for the poor showing: the great risk to which paintings would be exposed on so long a journey. Non-participation by the Confederate states and



Jasper Cropsey, *Autumn on the Hudson*, 1860.

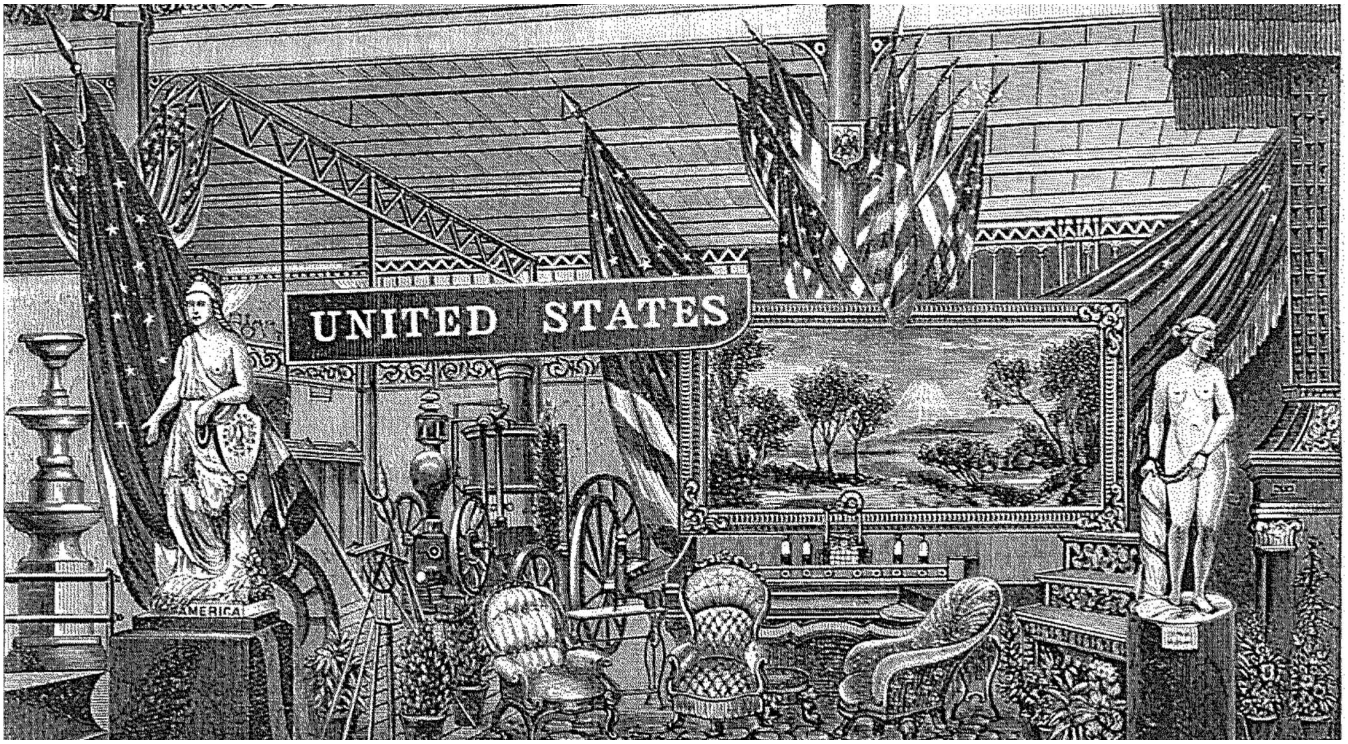
Congress's refusal to fund $30,000 to cover crating and shipping costs to Exhibition participants were unmentioned. Behind Congress's action was the rift between America and Britain over the recent Mason-Slidell Affair in which two Confederate agents were removed from a British ship and returned to America for trial. Not soon forgotten or forgiven, the incident had delayed America's request for Exhibition space. Possibly fearing ocean hazards, two leading American artists, Frederic Church (1826-1900) and Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902), sent no paintings to the Exhibition, but in 1867, the Civil War over, were among American artists who contributed 75 paintings for display at the French Exposition Universelle. The meager American showing led Tom Taylor, author of *Handbook of The Pictures in the London International Exhibition of 1862*, to group the United States with the Ionian Islands, Venezuela and Turkey as "countries with imperfectly represented to incipient schools."



Edward L. Mooney, *Jasper F. Cropsey at Age 24*, 1847. Collection of the Newington-Cropsey Foundation.

Among Cropsey's influential London acquaintances were Sir Charles Locke Eastlake (1793-1865), Director of the National Gallery; Lord Lyndhurst (1772-1863), son of John Singleton Copley; and the art critic John Ruskin (1818-1900). Between 1856 and 1862 twelve of Cropsey's paintings, mostly landscapes, had been accepted by the Royal Academy of Arts. Later, recalling his London years, he was particularly proud of his and his wife Maria's presentation to Queen Victoria at a drawing room levee in St. James Palace. So he was not without connections there.

Born in 1823 on a Rossville, Staten Island, farm and educated in simple country schools, Cropsey could never have imagined such a future. Ambition and hard work accompanied by his unusual dual talent for both art and architecture eventually led to success. Following an apprenticeship with New York architect Joseph Trench (1815-1879), he designed two Gothic Revival churches on Staten Island and by 1845 had branched out into landscape and figure painting. His view of Greenwood Lake from Bald Mountain, shown at the National Academy in 1844, resulted in his acceptance at age 21 as an associate member of the Academy. Many of Cropsey's early drawings point to his future as a landscape artist and his interest in nature. Even in his early years he was a close observer of tree species and plants. Among the drawings now in the collection of the Newington-Cropsey Foundation are



The American Department, showing Cropsey's *Autumn on the Hudson*, American flags and a copy of the *Greek Slave* by Hiram Powers.

Cropsey's early pencil studies of birch trunks, pine and cypress trees, white oaks, chestnuts and other tree species.

In May, 1847, Cropsey and his wife sailed for Europe, an essential, almost required indoctrination for American artists into past and current European art. Following visits to England and Scotland the Cropseys headed to Italy. There, he found his architectural background useful in studies of Italian subjects, such as views of the Roman campagna and sketches of ancient and medieval structures. In late July or early August, 1849, his sketchbooks filled, Cropsey returned to America and prepared to translate his European drawings into paintings, some with architectural themes set within surrounding landscapes. Among these were *The Sibyl's Temple* (c. 1850) and English and Scottish themes such as *Melrose Abbey by Moonlight* (c.1850).

Cropsey's focus began more and more, to turn toward American landscape art, which utilized the observation skills he had developed earlier. His growing interest in the natural world is indicated by his 1855 essay published in *Crayon*, titled "Up Among the Clouds," describing the varieties of sky formations. Cropsey's willingness to experiment in other aspects of art is shown in his participation in 1850 in painting 16 scenes illustrating John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Among other paintings painted during this period were *Catskill Creek, Autumn* (1850) and the dramatic *Storm in the Wilderness* (1851).

The decision by Cropsey in early summer 1856 to move to London was unexpected by his friends but no doubt had been months in the making. Despite difficulties in moving his family and establishing a new home, his hope was that his reputation would flourish and his often inadequate income would increase. He did not expect to remain indefinitely for prior to departure he had purchased land on Staten Island with the intention of building a future home.

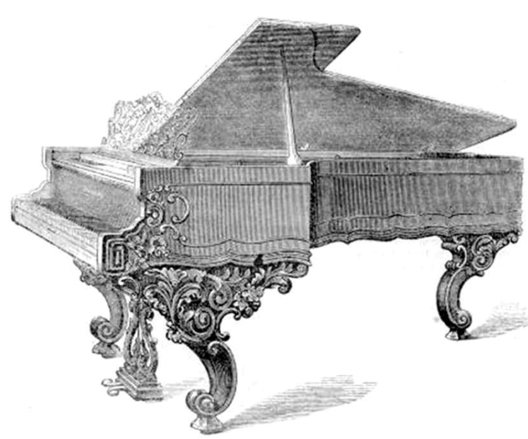
The American Department

Near the American Department's entrance on the Southwest side of Fowke's building stood a neatly

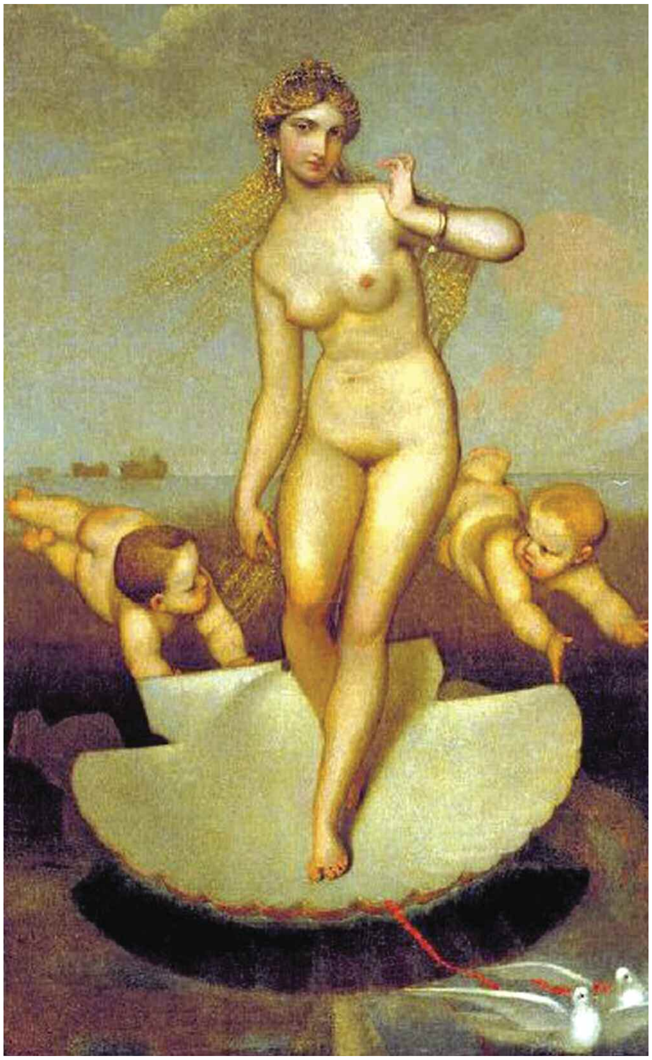
Engraving of Thomas Cole's *Voyage of Life* series depicting *Youth*, by James D. Smillie.

constructed model wooden house containing a registry of exhibits. Glimpsed beyond was the Department centerpiece, Cropsey's 60-by-108 -inch *Autumn on the Hudson*, painted in London in 1860. With cascades of American flags draped above, the colorful scene celebrated the American fall season while nearby a steam fire engine called attention to the country's technological advances. For emphasis there were two imposing statues standing on pedestals: a copy of the *Greek Slave* by Hiram Powers (1805-1873) and *Statue of America* by "Bruciana." Elsewhere hung four engravings from the *Voyage of Life* series by Thomas Cole (1802-1849) and engraved by James D. Smillie (1824-1879) and 42 photographs (viewed on a revolving apparatus) sent from the studio of Mathew Brady (1822-1896). Other displays included American banknotes and the engraving *Men of Progress* by John Sartain (1808-1897), copied from a painting by Christian Schussele (1824-1879) that called attention to America's eminent achievers.

Aside from collecting and arranging art, Cropsey's task included organizing the contributions sent from manufacturers who had shipped machines and products at their own expense. The Department planned to display both art and practical devices, among them two Steinway pianos, two square pianos, a cask-cleaning machine, a machine for picking cotton in the field, a printing press, two sewing machines, boot and shoemaking machines, an ingenious cow-milker and a machine for making paper bags. There were also samples of the pudding thickener "Maizena."



(Top to bottom): View of the International Exhibition nave from the Eastern Dome, 1862. Foreign Picture Gallery, International Exhibition, London 1862. Steinway grand piano, exhibited at the International Exhibition, 1862.

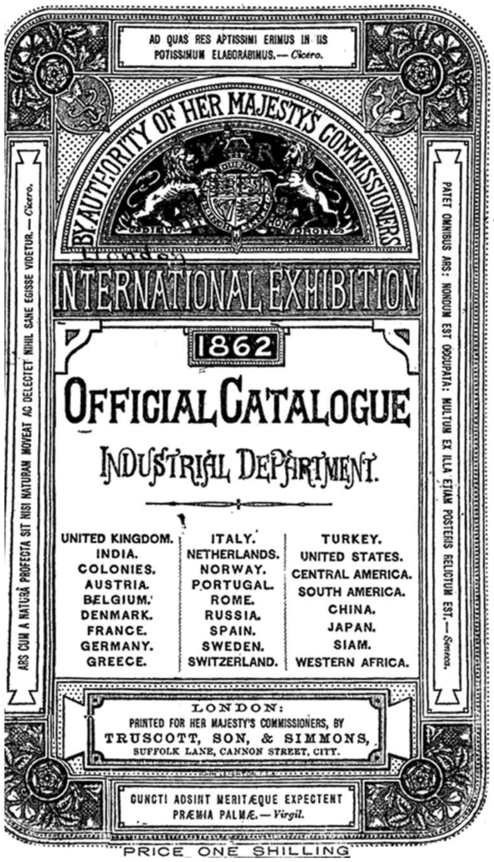
 

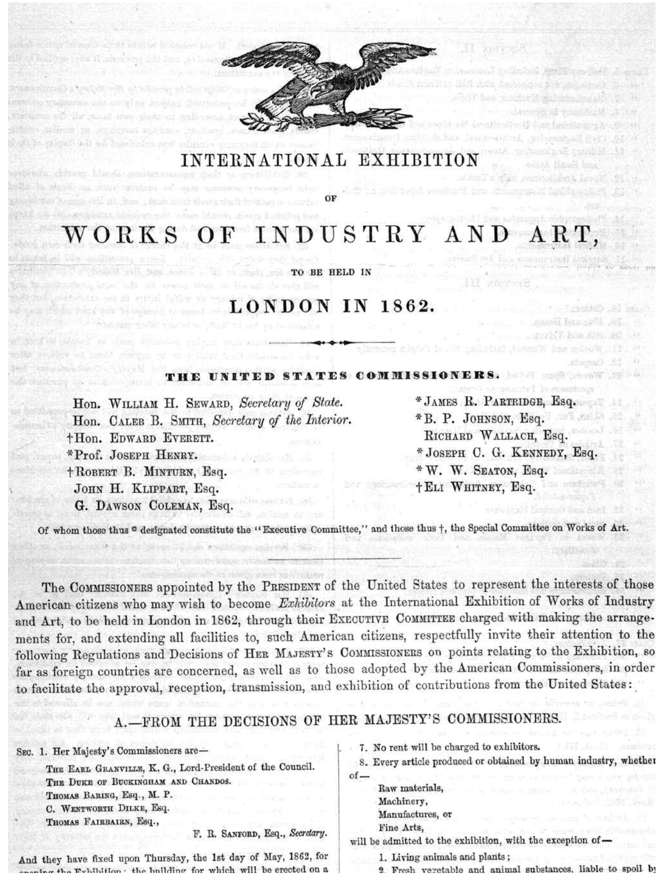
Wiliam Page, *Venus Guiding Eneas*, 1859. Page painted three or four versions, one of which was shown at the London exhibition. William Page, *Portrait of Mrs. Page*, 1860-1861.

Aside from *Autumn on the Hudson*, American art had originally been scheduled to hang with the paintings of other countries in the lavish Foreign Picture Gallery on the Northeast side of Fowke's building. But due to overcrowding, 14 American works were of necessity moved to the ground floor (referred to as the American Department). Probably arranged by Cropsey, the transfer included *Cane Brake in Louisiana*, one of his recent works loaned by actor Dion Boucicault; the now lost *Headwaters of the Susquehannah* by L. B. Mignot (1831-1870); two miniatures, *The Mother of Washington* and *Daniel Webster*, executed by English-born George Harvey (1800-1890); *Portrait of Mrs. Cropsey* by Daniel Huntington (1816-1900); four paintings by M. K. Kellogg (1814-1889): *The Bath Scene*; *The Flower of the Seraglio*, and two Kellogg's portraits; one, *John Thomas, Esq*., the other, *Mrs. John Thomas*. *The Night March* painted in 1853 by J. W. Glass (1825-1856) and two works by William Page (1811-1870): *Portrait of William Page* and *Portrait of Mrs. Page*.

In 1883, J. L. Peyton, author of *Rambling Reminiscences of a Resident Abroad*, could recall only six paintings in the American Department: Cropsey's *Autumn on the Hudson* and *Cane Break*, four works by Kellogg and two ideal pieces (possibly referring to Harvey's two miniatures). Complaining about the Department's inadequate lighting, The *New York Times* noticed that the paintings were hung where the light was thoroughly bad for art purposes, rather than in the originally-intended picture gallery where it was good. Other objections came from *New Path*, which wrote that William Page's paintings belonged in the magnificent upper galleries instead of the gloomy American Department shut off from light and space.

American paintings remaining in the Foreign Picture Gallery were *Herd of Bison Crossing a River Bottom on the Upper Missouri* and *Prairie Dog Village on the Upper Missouri* by William J. Hays (1830-1875), an artist virtually unknown on either side of the Atlantic; four paintings contributed by Cropsey: *Scene in the Catskill*





INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

OF

WORKS OF INDUSTRY AND ART,

TO BE HELD IN

LONDON IN 1862.

THE UNITED STATES COMMISSIONERS.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD, *Secretary of State.*
Hon. CALEB B. SMITH, *Secretary of the Interior.*
†Hon. EDWARD EVERETT.
*Prof. JOSEPH HENRY.
†ROBERT B. MINTURN, Esq.
JOHN H. KLIPPART, Esq.
G. DAWSON COLEMAN, Esq.
*JAMES R. PARTRIDGE, Esq.
*B. P. JOHNSON, Esq.
RICHARD WALLACH, Esq.
*JOSEPH C. G. KENNEDY, Esq.
*W. W. SEATON, Esq.
†ELI WHITNEY, Esq.

Of whom those thus * designated constitute the "Executive Committee," and those thus †, the Special Committee on Works of Art.

The COMMISSIONERS appointed by the PRESIDENT of the United States to represent the interests of those American citizens who may wish to become *Exhibitors* at the International Exhibition of Works of Industry and Art, to be held in London in 1862, through their EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE charged with making the arrangements for, and extending all facilities to, such American citizens, respectfully invite their attention to the following Regulations and Decisions of HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS on points relating to the Exhibition, so far as foreign countries are concerned, as well as to those adopted by the American Commissioners, in order to facilitate the approval, reception, transmission, and exhibition of contributions from the United States:

A.—FROM THE DECISIONS OF HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS.

SEC. 1. Her Majesty's Commissioners are—
THE EARL GRANVILLE, K. G., Lord-President of the Council.
THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS.
THOMAS BARING, Esq., M. P.
C. WENTWORTH DILKE, Esq.
THOMAS FAIRBAIRN, Esq.,
F. R. SANFORD, Esq., *Secretary.*

And they have fixed upon Thursday, the 1st day of May, 1862, for

7. No rent will be charged to exhibitors.
8. Every article produced or obtained by human industry, whether of—
Raw materials,
Machinery,
Manufactures, or
Fine Arts,
will be admitted to the exhibition, with the exception of—
1. Living animals and plants;

(L to R): Official Catalogue of the Industrial Department, 1862. Detail of pamphlet advertising the International Exhibition, 1861.

Mountains, *Spring*, *Sea Coast*, and *Isle of Wight*, which were painted in England from sketches between 1856 and 1862, and William Page's *Italian Peasants* along with his *Venus*.

Ten years earlier, London's Great Exhibition of 1852 had included statuary, but the Exhibition of 1862 was the first to devote a separate category to painting. The result was a surge of submissions sent from Europe and elsewhere soon overwhelming the Foreign Picture Gallery. Images by the London Stereographic Co. show some paintings hung above eye level and cushioned benches where seated visitors could enjoy the variety. In this setting America's 21 paintings, only seven of which remained in the Gallery, would not fare well. By comparison, England displayed 670 paintings all considered modern, meaning none earlier than J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851). Based on popularity alone, no American painting would be able to compete with *Light of the World* exhibited by Pre-Raphaelite William Holman Hunt (1827-1910).

With the exception of *Autumn on the Hudson*, the response to American art was disappointing. Most paintings were either ignored or received scant notice. The *London Times* acknowledged, however, that in the handful of American works displayed were Cropsey's beautiful view on the Hudson River and his boldly painted torrent in the Catskill Mountains (referring to *Scene in the Catskill Mountains*).

The *Wisconsin Farmer* believed that America's art, though not shown in large numbers, was unsurpassed in quality. Nothing, it wrote, is superior to *Autumn on the Hudson* – as an afterthought adding: "We had hoped to see Church at the exhibition with his noble Heart of the Andes and his matchless Niagara, but in this we were disappointed." *Praise for Autumn on the Hudson* also came from Col. Tal Shaffner writing in the Illustrated Record of the International Exhibition:

> Mr. Cropsey's picture which most faithfully represented the golden hue of the October foliage peculiar to the American forest...will give Cropsey a name that will live long after his own earthly career.

Cropsey's *Cane Brake in Louisiana*, although receiving less notice was also praised by Shaffner for the indescribable beauty of the scene as the sun was seen to dawn.

Bath Scene by Minor K. Kellogg (1814-1889), today known only from a painted-over photograph, was described as portraying a lady of the "Circassian type" of beauty reclining amidst luxurious cushions. Shocking to some viewers because of the central figure's nudity, Kellogg in general earned high praise. To Shaffner, the American Department was honored by having Kellogg's paintings, citing the *Bath Scene* as the most admired and exhibiting powers of thought and artistic merit rarely displayed.

William Page (1811-1885) whose four paintings were shipped from America to London at his own expense, were judged by the *London Morning Post* as not of the highest merit, concluding that Page seemed to have lost himself in an unknown wilderness following some "Will-o-wisp of old master secrets." The *New York Times*, no admirer of Page's dismal realism, nonetheless found merit in his two portraits.

The *London Morning Post*, referring to *Prairie Dog Village* by W. J. Hays (1830-1875), observed careful painting characterized by much strength, but with subject matter not well fitted for pictorial representation. Tom Taylor, in *Handbook of The Pictures in the International Exhibition of 1862* found that Hays's *Prairie Dog Village* depicted "little creatures – which look like a cross between rabbit and guinea-pig, playing and peeping about their holes in the light green prairie grass." There was difficulty, Taylor wrote, in believing the painter had not been tempted into exaggeration.

Ignored were *Night March* by J. W. Glass (1825-1856), painted when he lived in England in 1853, and two miniatures by English-born George Harvey (1800-1879), *The Mother of Washington*, a probable copy of a portrait of Mary Ball Washington owned by Samuel F. B. Morse (1701-1872), and *Portrait of Daniel Webster*. Receiving no more than passing mention was Mignot's now lost *Headwaters of the Susquehannah*.

On November 15, the London International Exhibition of 1862 closed with none of the ceremony that marked opening day. Cropsey, who had worked tirelessly on behalf of the American Department, probably drew a sigh of relief. Apart from fulfilling his patriotic duty, he received no monetary reward but the highest praise from the United States Chief Commissioner P. B. Johnson who wrote that there was "no more intelligent and faithful representative of our country."

William Jacob Hays, *Prairie Dog Village*, 1860.

In looking back, Cropsey may have recalled at least one bright spot in a year devoted to the Exhibition: an invitation to a gala concert and ball for Exhibition leaders held at London's historic Guildhall. In the future, the experience helped him manage the New Jersey Department at New York City's Metropolitan Fair on behalf of wounded soldiers. And in 1867, as an experienced voice, he would join Frederic Church in advising Congress on America's representation at the French Exhibition Universelle.

Hutchings' California Magazine, July 1856.

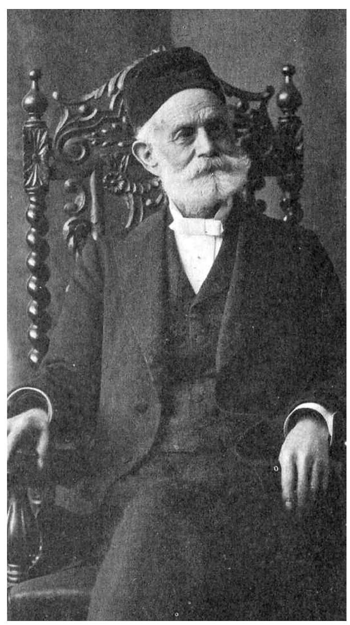
Curiosities and Wonders

Hutchings' California Magazine (1856-1861)

CYNTHIA HAVESON VELORIC

Since the mid-twentieth century, we as consumers have been able to peruse the pages of books and magazines and see sleek color photographs of remote vacation destinations. In the twenty-first century the availability and rapidity with which we gain access to these images has increased to such an extent that we need merely enter a search term on a computer and push a button, making us more active participants in the quest. Within the context of mid-nineteenth century mass visual culture, readers as consumers gained visual knowledge of remote territories of the United States differently. How, specifically, did Americans receive images of the newly discovered Sierra Nevada Mountains and Yosemite Valley in California? And what did they see?

Although the printing and publishing industry had gained great momentum by the 1850s in selected cities on the East Coast and in the Midwest, its leaders had not attempted to venture to, nor portray visually much of, the western United States. Only a few European American settlers had explored northern California, until discovery of gold in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in 1849 spurred travel and trade in the area. There had been earlier confirmed sightings of Yosemite Valley, most notably by members of the "Mariposa Battalion" in the fight between gold miners and Native Americans in 1851, but very few descriptions of its geographical marvels had been published, and none illustrated and widely disseminated. (The government survey reports of the late 1850s contained illustrations, but these were mainly scientific and topographical, intended for establishing Western railroad routes.) It was not until after the Civil War that important, widely circulated East Coast publications such as *Harper's* and *Leslie's* sent artist-illustrators to record the landscape and human activity in the Far West.



James Mason Hutchings (1820-1902)

However, there was one, if lesser-known, pre–Civil War publication that brought Yosemite's beauty initially to the attention of California residents and later to Americans throughout the country. *Hutchings' California Magazine* (hereafter *HCM*), established in 1856, was the first illustrated journal to promote appreciation for the region as a scenic destination. Its publisher, James Mason Hutchings, had two goals in mind: to spread through words and images the multiple glories of California and its people, and to gain profit from the endeavor. In the introductory essay in the first number of *HCM*, Hutchings advised, "We wish to picture California, and California life; to portray its beautiful scenery and curiosities; to speak of its mineral and agricultural products; to tell of its wonderful resources and commercial advantages; and to give utterance to the inner life and experience of its people…"[1] Hutchings believed that some of what California had to offer, especially its remarkable landscape, could be best expressed pictorially, but that other economic or social advantages were best described in words.

James Mason Hutchings (1820-1902) brought bourgeois, Protestant values with him when he immigrated to the United States from England in 1848. Seeking economic security along with adventure, he sought work in the less populated regions of the United States before he moved to San Francisco in 1855. His itinerary is fully recounted in a travelogue he wrote, as well as in the works of Jen A. Huntley and Peter E. Palmquist.[2] During Hutchings's years as a gold miner, journalist, traveler, and photographer (1849-1855), he was already formulating ideas about how to spread, through word and image, the visual splendor of the California he knew first-hand. All the while, he was gathering notes and pictorial records for a proposed publication to be titled "Panorama of California." Huntley gives an extensive analysis of the economic, social, and political factors in northern California that she feels played into Hutchings's ambitions and publications.

Essentially she sees him as an individual force connecting aesthetics, morality, and economic enterprise in the San Francisco region in the late 1850s. To this solid and multi-disciplinary study of the man I would like to add another realm – Hutchings as arts impresario and shaper of visual culture. He successfully connected artists, photographers, and printers in an effort to promote the sublime aspects of California scenery before other entrepreneurs did so. Through his selection of views, printed pictures, and texts, he communicated a message that he hoped would entice tourists and settlers alike. Hutchings's artistic works had a far-reaching cultural impact that included a rise in tourism, a new visual vocabulary of California and, if inadvertently, the creation of a national park.

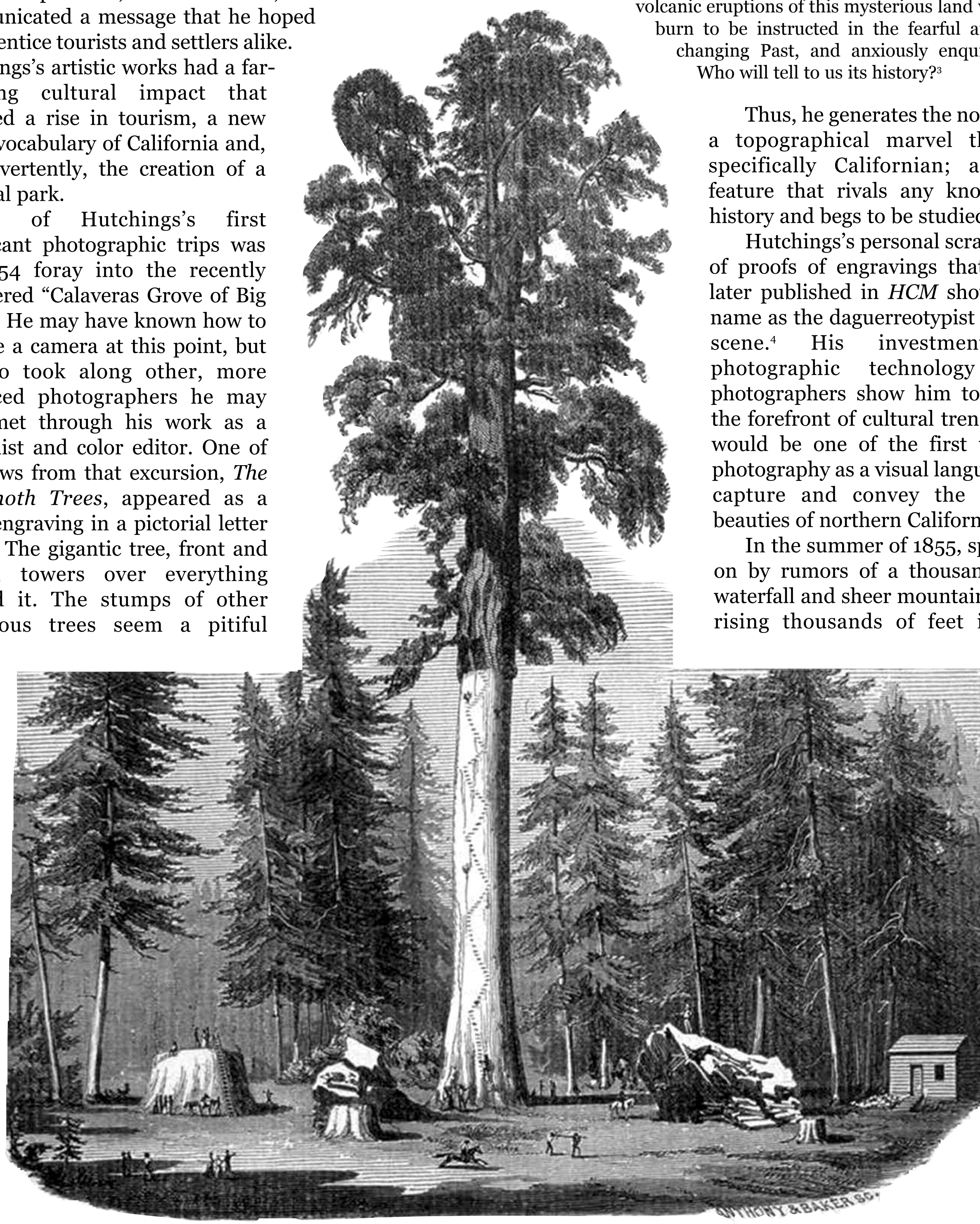
One of Hutchings's first significant photographic trips was his 1854 foray into the recently discovered "Calaveras Grove of Big Trees." He may have known how to operate a camera at this point, but he also took along other, more advanced photographers he may have met through his work as a journalist and color editor. One of the views from that excursion, *The Mammoth Trees*, appeared as a wood engraving in a pictorial letter sheet. The gigantic tree, front and center, towers over everything around it. The stumps of other enormous trees seem a pitiful presence suggesting further destruction. Tiny humans scatter about, confronted with and amazed by the behemoth. Hutchings's accompanying prose gives readers impressive measurements, ages, and locations of the species, and observes,

> …you cannot fully conceive the awful grandeur of the scene as their giant shadows fall upon you…they must be seen to be appreciated. … As we gaze in admiring wonder upon these ancient Californians that for three thousand years have withstood the storms, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions of this mysterious land we burn to be instructed in the fearful and changing Past, and anxiously enquire Who will tell to us its history?[3]

Thus, he generates the notion of a topographical marvel that is specifically Californian; a land feature that rivals any known to history and begs to be studied.

Hutchings's personal scrapbook of proofs of engravings that were later published in *HCM* shows his name as the daguerreotypist of this scene.[4] His investment in photographic technology and photographers show him to be at the forefront of cultural trends. He would be one of the first to use photography as a visual language to capture and convey the scenic beauties of northern California.

In the summer of 1855, spurred on by rumors of a thousand-foot waterfall and sheer mountain walls rising thousands of feet in the



James Mason Hutchings, *The Mammoth Trees*. Wood engraving, 1854.

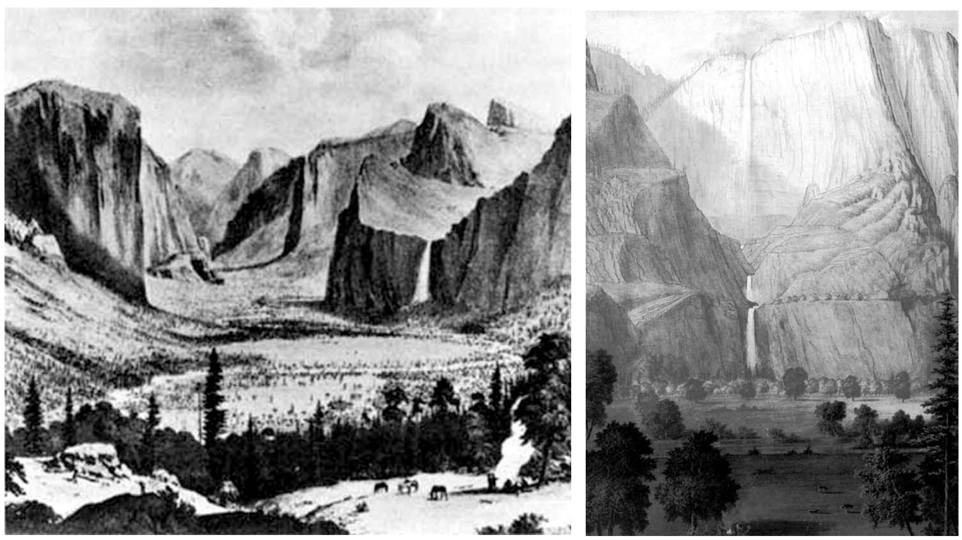
Yosemite Valley, Hutchings composed a travel group of four, including two Native American guides and the artist Thomas Ayres. They would be the first known tourist party to purposefully seek out this legendary site. Hutchings planned to have Ayres, from whom he had recently bought a drawing, sketch in the field, with the ultimate goal of printing the first views of Yosemite for the public. When Hutchings entered the Valley and located the Yosemite Falls, he was awestruck. Here was the embodiment of the English Romantic notion of nature as a source of divine inspiration, an escape from urban stress, yet potentially fraught with danger. He wrote that it was “beyond the power of language to describe the awe-inspiring majesty of the darkly frowning and overhanging mountain walls of solid granite that here hem you in on every side, as though they would threaten you.... did you attempt for a moment to deny their power.”[5] Ayres’s initial images were sketched on sandpaper.[6]

One of these panoramic drawings could be said to follow European landscape conventions: the slightly elevated view, the balance of verticals and horizontals, clearly distinguished planes of depth, a mountainous background, tiny foreground figures, and the use of meandering water to carry the viewer through space. The other drawing shown here is less conventional, with a huge mountain wall blocking recession, closely cropped top and sides, and foreground trees that partially block visual entry to the valley. Both pictorial layouts conceptually make order out of the chaos of wilderness. But there may have been another impulse. The artist, nearly alone in the wilderness, free from any academy or other artists, spontaneously sketched the panoramic view before him from the vantage point of a ridge (later identified as Inspiration Point). Why at that momentous occasion would he think about reverting to stereotypical constructs of landscape? Is it possible that Hutchings was encouraging him to follow a convention that he felt would appeal to and attract a consumer market? Would he use Yosemite as a symbol to link California with other known “sublime” landscapes, therefore promoting tourism? These are picturesque views, if not masterfully executed. In both images, the space is delimited by towering cliffs, forcing the viewer into a protected space where he can contemplate his relationship to the majesty of nature.

Immediately after leaving Yosemite Valley, Hutchings copyrighted and published two of Ayres’s drawings in San Francisco as large lithographs, with the titles “Hutchings Panoramic Scenes in California. The Yo-Hamite Falls, Situated in the Yo-Hamite Valley” and “General View of the Great Yo-Semite Valley, Mariposa County, California.” He quickly commodified them in a series of letter sheets and engravings. The “Yo-Hamite Falls” lithograph was priced at $2.50, a price the middle class could afford (as a comparison, Hutchings himself made anywhere from $5.70 to $27.30 a day panning for gold in 1849).[7] Hutchings’s entrepreneurial idea caught on quickly. When Ayres’s drawings were exhibited in New York City, they were the first views of Yosemite to be seen there. He was quickly hired by *Harpers’ Weekly* to illustrate several articles on California, but this commission never materialized because Ayres soon died. However, the prints appeared again in the magazine that Hutchings would develop a few years later.

As Hutchings travelled throughout the region from 1853-55, he would seek out artists and photographers in small towns to help him build up a pictorial record of exceptional, remote landscapes (i.e., artist Edward Jump and daguerreotype photographer Oliver Norcross). Hutchings himself had a hand in many of the views as

A comparison of the “Falls” drawing with the lithograph may yield clues about how the pictures functioned in Hutchings’s projects. The first obvious difference is the exchange of certain round-profiled deciduous trees with redwoods and sequoias. These are given prominence at front center, and appear as vertical spikes throughout the rest of the composition. A more subtle modification is the location and visual distinction of people and animals in the foreground, which had been nearly indistinguishable in the drawing. Another alteration can be seen in the falls themselves. The print amplifies the spray of the crashing water at each of three levels. With these revisions, Hutchings is emphasizing the giant tree species native to California and the incomparable height of the Yosemite waterfalls (which might rival Niagara Falls). He also seems to be suggesting that although men and animals are dwarfed by the immense topographical features, they can find a comfortable place for themselves in the valley. Hutchings hoped that scenes like this would be attractive to the armchair traveler and the adventurous tourist alike.



Thomas Ayres, Yosemite Valley lithograph and drawing, 1855.

designer or photographer, so he served as both artist and impresario. Periodically he contracted with local engravers in Shasta and Sacramento. This combination of hired artists, photography, and print media allowed him to stay on the cutting edge of techniques available for the dissemination of his landscape imagery. It is possible that Hutchings's agency actually promoted his agenda more quickly than if he had been part of an established system of art patronage.

After achieving a modicum of financial success in his peripatetic print offerings, Hutchings was ready to establish himself in San Francisco. By June 1856, he finally anchored his dream of editing and publishing an illustrated panorama of California in his new "Hutchings' California Magazine." The advertisement at the back of the first issue proudly stated that "Each number of the Magazine will contain FORTY-EIGHT PAGES of interesting Reading Matter, in double columns, with several Illustrations of the Scenery, Incidents, Curiosities and Resources of California." *HCM* was the first illustrated monthly in California. Previously, pictures of California were limited to topographical and geological maps used for exploration, territorial claims, railroad development, mining, and Indian tracking.[8] Additionally, the descriptions of California's terrain that circulated in the East were not always favorable. A member of the American Geological Society asserted that "between the ninety-eighth meridian and the Pacific slope generally the land is unfit for the support of an ordinary civilized community."[9] While it has been established that *HCM* was the first illustrated monthly (*The Pioneer* was the first monthly), the illustrations were the first to promote the landscape as scenery, landscape as aesthetic visual culture. Hutchings intended to fill a cultural void

Charles L. Weed, *Yo-Semite Valley, from the Mariposa Trail*, 1864.

by presenting beautiful realistic views that promoted tourism and settlement, while changing American assumptions about the area's inhospitable land and climate. Seeking a broad audience, the advertisements stated that the magazine would be "... a pleasant Monthly Visitor to the Cabin and the Parlor, and an interesting monthly present to friends in the Atlantic States." Advertisements were placed in at least one East Coast publication, the *New York Herald*, on March 21, 1858. New Yorkers took notice; *The Knickerbocker*, in November, 1856, wrote, "Hutchings California Magazine succeeds to the 'Pioneer' which has been discontinued. It is neatly executed, and judging from the only number which we have seen, promises to prove an attractive magazine."

It has been suggested that Hutchings's Gold Rush experience (unruly, chaotic, single white males) "reinforced his bourgeois assumptions about the need to create a stable, moral social world through landscape imagery and print culture."[10] There may be some truth to this theory, for he complained in his personal diaries about ruthless behavior, vigilantism, drunkenness, and lack of regard for the Sabbath. However, his dissatisfaction with the locals was not his overriding motive. It would be difficult to find another titular head of a Western magazine that was more spiritually, culturally, or artistically invested in the local landscape. For eight years Hutchings had seen with his own eyes, recorded with his own hands, and felt with his own heart the California experience that he wanted to share with the public. Giant trees, geysers, perpendicular granite walls, forested slopes, snow-capped peaks were all awaiting public exposure via his sincere missionary zeal as transmitter.

Later in that same year, 1856, Hutchings joined forces with printer Anton Rosenfield. During their six-year partnership (hereafter H&R) they were among the most prolific mid-century publishers of California ephemera.

Map of San Francisco, 1856.

They moved their office into the heart of San Francisco's printing district, which was also home to legal, financial, and real estate businesses. The neighborhood was rich in print culture – lithographers, engravers, stationers, paper suppliers, booksellers, newspaper offices, job printers. All these related trades supported each other and helped fuel the burgeoning print industry, the most important on the West Coast to date. Essential resources such as paper, type, bookbinding materials, large steam presses, a stereotype foundry, and silver nitrate (for plates) were available locally by 1856. Photographic technology advanced rapidly in California – by the late 1850s the collodion process was available, making it possible to reproduce prints from a single negative. Hutchings may have invested in his own photographic equipment and plates early on, for despite the diversity of H&R publications, they repeat many of the same illustrations and text.[11] H&R published many illustrations based on purchased or commissioned daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, and wet-plate photographs from several artists including H. M. Bacon, Robert H. Vance, and Charles Leander Weed. The engravings were executed by California's finest, including Thomas Armstrong, Harrison Eastman, and Charles Nahl.[12] *HCM* was moderately successful by the standards of the day; in a decade which saw a downward swing in the number of periodicals, the magazine flourished for five years.[13]

H&R produced several types of cultural ephemera: letter sheets, almanacs, children's books, broadsides, travel guides, maps, and illustrated how-to books. The profit from these publications may have enabled Hutchings to hire the best artists available for his most passionate endeavors – *Hutchings' California Magazine* (1856-61), *Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity in California* (1860), and *California Pictorial Almanac* (1859, 1860).

By examining the permanent cover of *HCM* shown here, the viewer can immediately grasp Hutchings's intention and aesthetic. Three-quarters of the page is devoted to a vertically-oriented landscape comprising both mountain and valley views. Towering redwoods command the hillsides and frame the composition. Majestic mountain peaks fill the horizon and stimulate the imagination. A small log cabin sits on the hilly bank of a stream while tiny humans appear to work on the other bank, all in harmony with nature. Under the date of publication is a smaller, narrow seascape. The wide angle of coastline is filled with several types of commercial and leisure boats including schooners and steamboats. Although Hutchings was especially partial to the beauties of Yosemite, he wanted to include scenes of other parts of northern California as well, as much as would fit on a nine-inch page. This illustration may be a pastiche, or based on a photograph. In the upper vignette he communicated great height through the trees and mountains; in the lower one he rendered a wide view of a major waterway off a coast. Although neither picture conveys the vast scale of the open frontier, the cover successfully suggests the natural, unspoiled, hospitable beauty of California. His title is composed of images of wooden logs and branches, further integrating symbols of native natural resources. Hutchings did not neglect to include the name of the engraver, H. Eastman. He would continue to be mindful of crediting his contributing artists throughout his publishing career. First and foremost though, he was mindful of crediting himself. His name appears twice on the cover, a format used simultaneously by *Harper's* and *Putnam's*. With an eye to promoting tourism, *HCM* was heavily saturated with illustrated travel narratives, but also included essays that promoted local technological development.

But the pictures alone cannot take all the credit for creating public interest; Hutchings's accompanying rapturous prose greatly added to their impact. In "The Great Yo-Semite Valley" (October, 1859) he exclaimed,

> The truth is, the first view of this convulsion-rent valley, with its perpendicular mountain cliffs, deep gorges, and awful chasms, spread out before us like a mysterious scroll, took away the power of thinking, much less of clothing thoughts with suitable language...

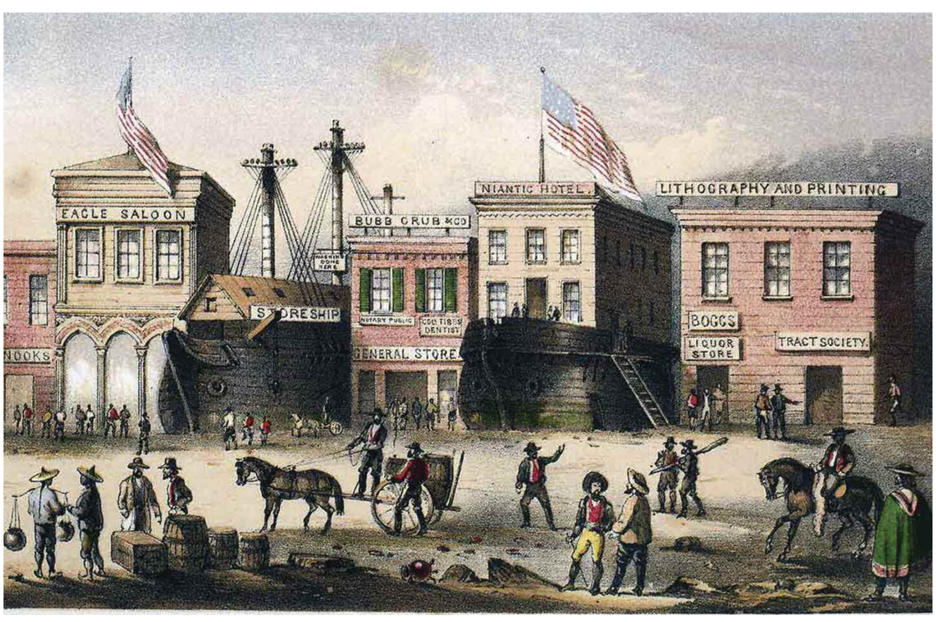
Closer inspection of the layout of text and images gives an idea of how readers received information. *HCM* followed the format of popular contemporary monthlies in other regions of the country like *Harper's*. Behind the cover lies a linear, neatly aligned table of contents, which invariably included an introduction by the editor, illustrated descriptions of northern California, news, poetry, book reviews, fiction, local history, juvenile matter, and an "Editor's Table," billed as a "social chat with Contributors and Correspondants." The last few pages were devoted to stylish advertisements.

Each page of the magazine has double columns, divided by a vertical line. The placement of the wood-engraved illustrations varies greatly; they appear throughout articles, occupying anywhere from an eighth of a page to an entire page. They are all inserted in the appropriate places, in tandem with the text, which is a comfortable accommodation for the reader, though the occasional landscape or specimen requires a half-turn of the magazine. The borders of the engravings also vary. Some float without framing on top of, under, or within the columns. Some are circumscribed by curvilinear contour lines. Some borders echo the rectilinear shape of the engraved plate or block, but edges are rounded. This non-uniformity makes for pleasing visual variety, even though the formulaic pattern of the engraved lines lacks subtlety and chiaroscuro. It is content, though, that overshadows technique.

Which brings us back to some essential questions: How did Hutchings choose which views or aspects of the land to communicate to his readers? How were the images composed? Did they always follow Romantic pictorial conventions or were they original to this time and place? In most cases Hutchings's preferences were the spectacular views unique to California, those that could rival any European vista, those that had potential to create in readers great waves of emotion, thereby enticing prospective tourists and settlers. Many of the panoramic views aligned with Romantic associations of the sublime, but occasionally the focus was on a single native specimen, like "A Large Pear," which filled an entire page. That type of visual emphasis mimicked scientific illustration, but may also have been intended to promote local agricultural bounty. He hoped or imagined that some of his sophisticated readers could identify with Romantic landscape imagery or had seen books with scientific illustrations. For the less cultured audience, he wished to present the more remote native landscape in an aesthetic and pleasing way so as to stimulate a desire to visit or settle near there. We can see some innovation in the composition of views. Many pictures were created by daguerreotype and from precarious sites, which precluded certain types of conventional angles, vistas, or framing. Hutchings probably made editorial and artistic choices based on multiple reasons – his personal preferences of locations and specimens to promote, those pictures that would best complement the text, and images he felt would appeal to his readers. In his "Editor's table" he explained,

> We shall be guided in our endeavors by a determination to select whatever we think will be most pleasing and acceptable to our readers.[14]

How would artistic images of northern California be supported in a region that lacked traditions of

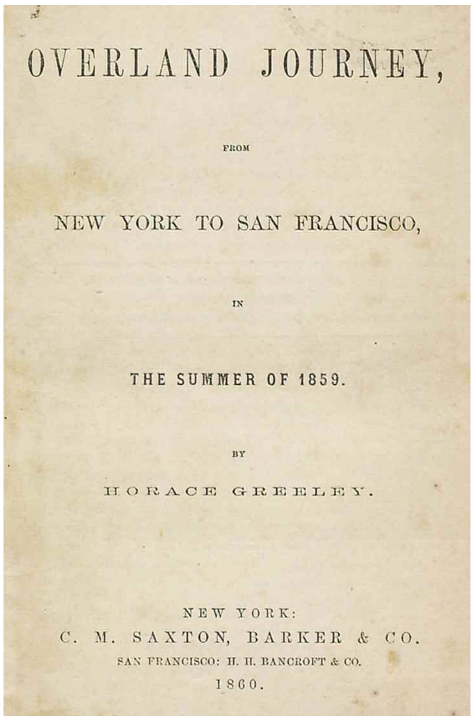


San Francisco, c. 1850. Another contributing factor to the success of Hutchings's publications was the location of his firm in the heart of San Francisco's business and publishing district.

patronage and exhibition? The greatest factor in their successful dissemination was Hutchings's strength of personality, social connections, and business savvy. As he travelled throughout the area, he made friends and acquaintances in every social stratum and ethnic group, from Chinese immigrants, to gold miners, to scientists. Most of these people had no frame of reference for art or access to it. Hutchings envisioned them as markets and therefore offered scenic views of the region in a reasonably priced, easily accessible format. The loftier aim of the project was supported by Reverend William A. Scott, an influential Presbyterian minister of San Francisco's Calvary Church, spiritual home to many of the city's business and cultural elite.[15] In his lectures, sermons and articles, Scott made connections between landscape and social morality, endorsing Hutchings's view of Yosemite as a sacred place, yet one which should be open to all.

Another contributing factor to the success of Hutchings's publications was the location of his firm in the heart of San Francisco's business and publishing district. Following the Gold Rush, the city's cultural and economic prospects were on the ascendant. By the mid-1850s one could find theater, opera, hotels, restaurants, annual industrial exhibitions, and a museum of anatomy and science. Although there were no art schools, galleries, or art museums, there were several photography studios and showrooms.[16] The city's most accomplished and commercially successful photographer, Robert Vance, was actually employed by Hutchings, as was Vance's partner, Charles Leander Weed. Weed, in fact, was the first known photographer to venture into Yosemite Valley. In June 1859, he and Hutchings took wet-plate photographs there. These were soon exhibited to the public in San Francisco, and printed as woodcuts in the October 1859 issue of *HCM*. These connections benefitted both parties; the photographers' work became known to a wider viewership, and the publisher acquired awe-inspiring photographs which, as engravings, enhanced his magazine.

Hutchings's productions produced important cultural offspring. Horace Greeley, influential editor of the *New York Tribune*, might well have seen Ayres's sketches of Yosemite when they were on exhibit in New York. They may have influenced Greeley's decision to visit Yosemite Valley himself in 1859. His letters from there, filled with dramatic descriptions, appeared in the *Tribune* and were subsequently published as a book.[17] Hutchings actually met Greeley in San Francisco, and they must have waxed euphoric together over Yosemite. Greeley's article on Yosemite was significant; it was the first widely distributed news about the spectacular valley by a nationally known and esteemed person, and it brought Yosemite to the attention of many Easterners for the first time. Illustrated articles on the Yosemite region did not appear in East Coast periodicals and books until after the Civil War. The first important one, "The Yosemite Valley, California," was published in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in December 1866. It bears a striking visual resemblance to the article of the same name in the first issue of *HCM*, though it reads more as a travelogue, and includes a scaled map of the Valley. *Frank Leslie's* printed an illustrated article on the Sierra in 1869, but did not illustrate Yosemite until 1891. Other publications of note that promoted Yosemite were *The Yosemite Guide Book* by geologist Josiah Whitney (1869) and *Picturesque America* (1872-1874) by William Cullen Bryant.


OVERLAND JOURNEY,

FROM

NEW YORK TO SAN FRANCISCO,

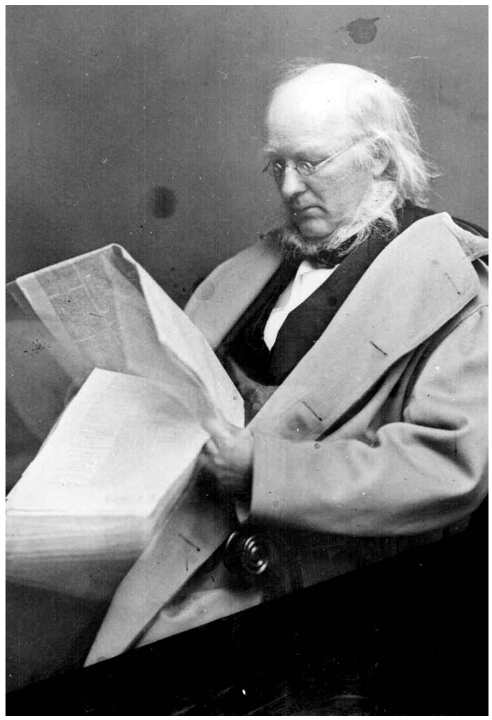
IN

THE SUMMER OF 1859.

BY

HORACE GREELEY.

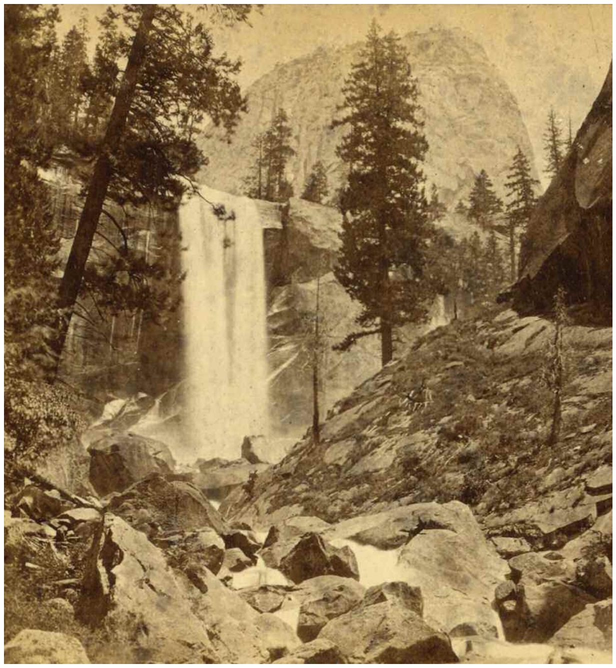
NEW YORK:
C. M. SAXTON, BARKER & CO.
SAN FRANCISCO: H. H. BANCROFT & CO.
1860.



(L to R): *Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco*, by Horace Greeley, 1860. Horace Greeley, c. 1860.

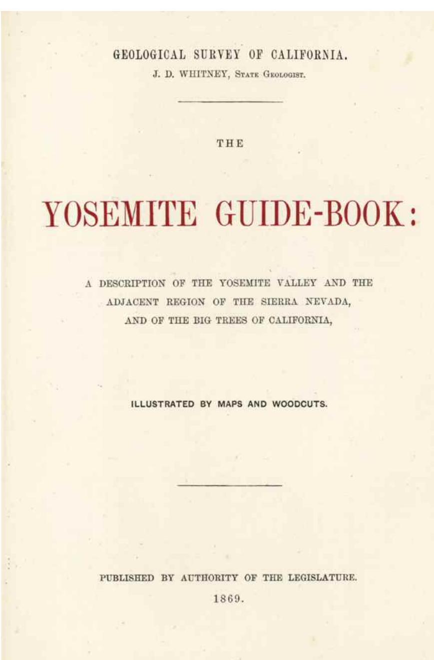
Easterners were able to see original photographs of Yosemite in 1862 when Carleton Watkins exhibited at the Goupil Gallery in New York. Watkins had worked as a photographer in San Francisco in the late 1850s. He probably knew Hutchings and may even have contracted with him.[18] It is likely that Weed's 1859 photographs of Yosemite (Hutchings-sponsored) prompted Watkins to undertake a more ambitious landscape project. In 1861 he entered the Valley and took one hundred stereo views and thirty mammoth-plate negatives. His photographic choices showed expansive valleys, rugged mountains, and the total absence of human habitation. His dramatic and powerful images were successfully used to stimulate the establishment of Yosemite Valley as a state park in 1864.[19]

When Hutchings hired itinerant sheepherder John Muir in 1869, he made an inadvertent contribution to the creation of Yosemite as a national park. Hutchings had purchased land in the Valley in 1864, with the intention of operating hotels. Whether this was his plan from the beginning of his California journey is not known, but he did not see capitalism as antithetical to his missionary zeal for the landscape.[20] Needing a constant supply of lumber for the buildings, he hired Muir to run the sawmill. They soon discovered their "sacred" mutual devotion to the environment and their commitment to its promotion. Muir was not opposed to tourism, as long as it did not involve reckless exploitation of natural resources. A transcendentalist, he became a charismatic and eloquent spokesman for the virtues of the park, which he had ample time to explore. His articles, books and public lectures ignited America's spiritual appreciation of nature, and his activism for wilderness preservation led to the National Park Bill (1890), establishing Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks.



Photograph of Vernal Falls by Carleton Watkins, 1861.

Hutchings's most significant cultural impact was the fact that his carefully chosen and composed landscape views played a large role in luring Americans to visit and settle in northern California, for he offered the first mass-produced illustrated publications focused on California life, landscape, and natural resources. His artistic imagery of the Sierra Nevada and Yosemite were the first to circulate throughout the country, and they inspired a host of similar views in major East Coast publications. His *Scenes of Curiosity and Wonder* (1862) was the first illustrated travel guide of Yosemite, predating those that came after the completion of the transcontinental railroad. During the run of his many publications (1855-1886), tourism in Yosemite increased dramatically. From 1855 to 1864 the total number of visitors was 653. In 1886 over 4,000 tourists visited.[21] In promoting Yosemite through art, he helped shape American attitudes about appreciating and preserving pristine wilderness. Public awareness and sentiment on



GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CALIFORNIA.
J. D. WHITNEY, State Geologist.

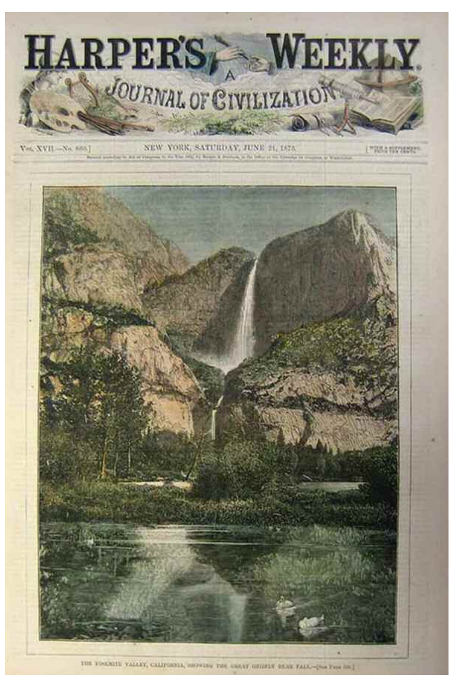
THE

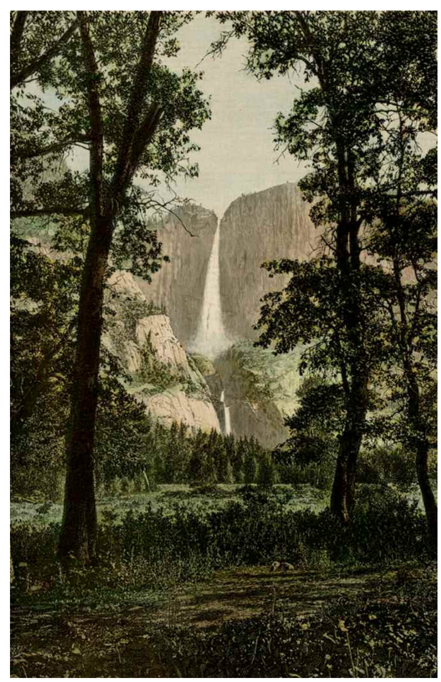
YOSEMITE GUIDE-BOOK:

A DESCRIPTION OF THE YOSEMITE VALLEY AND THE ADJACENT REGION OF THE SIERRA NEVADA, AND OF THE BIG TREES OF CALIFORNIA,

ILLUSTRATED BY MAPS AND WOODCUTS.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE LEGISLATURE.
1869.





The Yosemite Guide Book, by Josiah Whitney, 1869. Cover of *Harper's Weekly*, December 1866. Yosemite Falls, published by *Frank Leslie's*, 1891.

this issue increased dramatically, and over time, through legislation, led to the creation of a national park.

By the end of the nineteenth century, California's material development was well underway. Unfortunately, much of the novelty and romance of the landscape that Hutchings experienced was lost in the process. Happily, his magazine had an afterlife in periodicals of the 1870s and 1880s, which acknowledged him and reprinted his illustrations.[22] Hutchings's cultural contribution of the 1850s was appreciated thirty-five years later in *Century* magazine: "Yet the spectacle of the activity of the surging crowds in the canons of the Sierra lacks something of ideality until one ponders upon its inner motive, as shown in the entr'actes. One has only to read the newspapers of that day, or, better, to look through the volumes of Hutchings' California Magazine, to catch the 'very pulse' of the movement to California."[23]

The author gratefully acknowledges the invaluable help of Professor Michael Lega at the University of Pennsylvania who guided her in strategic directions.

Notes

1. "Our Introductory," *Hutchings' California Magazine*, vol.1, no.1 (July 1856), 1.
2. *James Mason Hutchings, Seeking the Elephant, 1849, James Mason Hutchings' Journal of His Overland Trek to California, Including His Voyage to America, 1848, and Letters from the Mother Lode*, edited and with an introduction by Shirley Sargent (rpt. Glendale, California: A.H. Clark, 1980). Jen A. Huntley, *The Making of Yosemite: James Mason Hutchings and the Origin of America's Most Popular National Park* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011). Peter E. Palmquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn, Pioneer Photographers of the Far West: A Biographical Dictionary, 1840-1865 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).
3. *Hutchings' California Scenes. The Mammoth Trees* ([Self-published?], 1854), sun print of wood engraving signed Anthony & Baker, 22 x 18 cm. (California Lettersheets Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley).
4. Palmquist, 313
5. "Discovery and Invention in Yosemite 1864-1877," accessed October 2013, http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma96/railroad/yosemite.html
6. Huntley, 76.
7. Huntley, 28.
8. See *United States, Reports of Explorations and Surveys, to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean* (Washington, DC: A.O.P. Nicholson, printer, 1855-61).
9. *Journal of the American Geological Society*, I, 76 (March 1859) reprinted in Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, Volume II., 1850-1865 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938), 120.
10. Huntley, 4.
11. Huntley, 94.
12. Palmquist, 315.
13. Mott, 4. In 1861 it was sold and merged with T*he California Mountaineer* to become *The California Magazine and Mountaineer*.
14. *Hutchings' California Magazine*, no.37, July 1859, p.47.
15. Huntley, 69-70.
16. The arrival of Albert Bierstadt in San Francisco in 1863 galvanized an artistic boom in paintings and patrons. He was the first honorary member of the San Francisco Art Union, established in 1865. In addition, the wealth generated by the Gold Rush, railroads, the Comstock Lode, banking, and commerce, created a very favorable climate for artists. Western landscapes were eagerly sought by San Francisco society patrons, and local artists' activities were duly reported in the papers and periodicals.
17. Horace Greeley, *An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859* (New York: C. M. Saxton, Barker & Co., 1860), 295
18. Weston Naef, former Getty Museum photography curator and author of *Carleton Watkins in Yosemite*, makes a convincing case that Watkins first visited Yosemite a few years before 1861 and took some of the photographs that Hutchings used. According to Naef, several HCM engravings bear all of Watkins's hallmarks. Naef feels that they must have been directly inspired by now lost images captured by the photographer. (Much of Watkins's archive was destroyed during the San Francisco earthquake of 1906.) Watkins included Hutchings' Hotel in his stereograph *The Sentinel, Yosemite Valley*, 1865-66.
19. On May 17, 1864, Senator John Conness of California, acting at the urging of some of his constituents, introduced a bill in Congress that proposed setting aside a large tract of natural scenery for the future enjoyment of everyone. On June 30, 1864, President Lincoln signed an act of Congress ceding the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias to the state of California.
20. In the spring of 1864 Hutchings purchased two tracts of land in Yosemite that were governed by preemption laws, which supported frontier homesteads. When the Yosemite Grant commissioners forebade ownership of private property, Hutchings was ousted from his beloved home, a sad irony.
21. As stated in James Hutchings, *In the Heart of the Sierras: the Yo Semite Valley Both Historical and Descriptive: and Scenes by the Way ... with Tables of Distances and Altitudes, Maps ... Illustrated* (Yo Semite Valley, 1886), 130-1. Although Hutchings states that he compiled these statistics from registers, exact numbers of tourists are nearly impossible to obtain. One such register from the Cosmopolitan Bathhouse and Saloon, known as the "Grand Register of Yo-Semite Valley," contains 18,000 signatures from 1873 to 1884.
22. See *The Phrenological Journal* (Dec.1874), 33; Francis Sheldon, "Pioneer Illustration in California," *Overland Monthly and Out West*, vol. XI, no.64 (April 1888), 1.
23. *The Century*, Vol. 41, Issue 1 (Nov.1890), 151.

STAIRCASE AT HAWKHURST, KENT.

The Jacobean hall of Great Wigsell, from Reginald Blomfield, *History of Renaissance Architecture in England*, 1897.

Architecture and the Decorative Arts

IN HENRY JAMES'S *THE SPOILS OF POYNTON*

MARIE FRANK

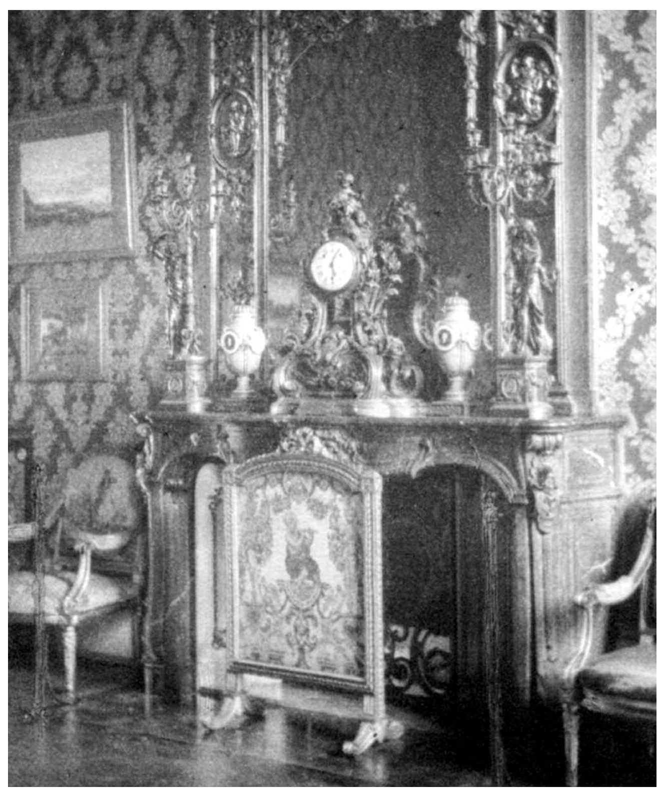
Henry James and other nineteenth-century American authors often used their knowledge of architecture and the decorative arts to support their fiction; characters live in houses that mirror their personalities or important scenes occur in places that reinforce a character's actions or conversation. With *The Spoils of Poynton* (1897), however, James reversed the situation; rather than serve as a foil for the action, architecture and the decorative arts claim center stage in the drama.

Poynton, a beautiful Jacobean manor house filled with antiques, will instigate a war. The parties in the combat include a supporting cast of four principal characters. The house had been owned, and lovingly furnished over a lifetime, by Mrs. Gereth and her husband. When the husband died, the house and its contents passed to their son, Owen. Owen, however, chooses a fiancée, Mona Brigstock, whom Mrs. Gereth immediately scorns for her inability to truly appreciate the beauty of Poynton. Mrs. Gereth resolutely refuses to turn Poynton over to Mona and the battle begins. The last character, and heroine of the novel, is Fleda Vetch – the young impecunious companion of Mrs. Gereth who has an innate taste for the beautiful. Fleda herself falls in love with Owen and gets caught in the middle between mother and son as they vie over the future of the house. Rather than simply serve as a setting for the novel's characters, Poynton will draw out their vices and virtues.

Like his friend and fellow author Edith Wharton, James had a lifelong interest in architecture and the decorative arts. He used architecture as a metaphor for the very act of literary creation: the initial idea, he wrote, was the author's "ground, his site and his foundation. [On it he] builds and piles high, lays together the blocks quarried in the deeps of his imagination and on his personal premises." He referred to the author as the master-builder and the novel as a citadel.[1] James paired this metaphorical use with a very concrete knowledge of the arts. Scholars have amply demonstrated James's knowledge of Ruskin, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Aestheticism, and his friendships with artists such as John LaFarge; his later novel *The Outcry* (1911) sounded a humorous but long-standing lament over the dispersal of fine arts objects from England's country houses.[2]

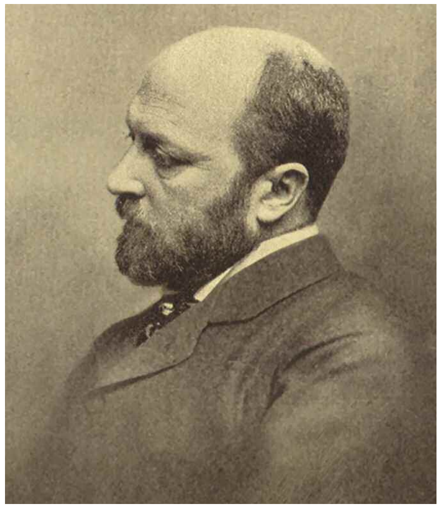
James was no stranger to debates and current architectural trends on both sides of the Atlantic. Advocates of the Arts and Crafts movement and American Renaissance had drawn attention to the shaping influences of architecture and the decorative arts on the individual. The burgeoning wealth of Gilded Age Americans as well as industrialized production, however, had made the consumption of architecture and decorative arts all too easy and all too tasteless. James recognized that a story of tables and chairs had value precisely because of "the sharp light it might project on that most modern of our current passions, the fierce appetite for the upholsterer's and joiner's and brazier's work."[3]

Choices James made regarding his novel reinforce a shift in taste in the arts in both the United States and England. He populated Poynton with the same Italian



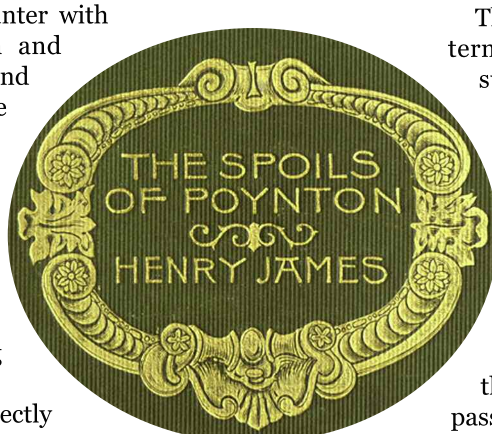
For the publication of the New York edition of the novel in 1908, James commissioned this photograph by Alvin Langdon Coburn for the frontispiece.

textiles and French Louis Quinze and Louis Seize furniture that Wharton, with Ogden Codman, would use to illustrate *The Decoration of Houses* (published the same year as James's novel). This reform manifesto signaled a decisive break from Victorian clutter to more classically restrained interiors. Similarly, when deciding on a photograph for the frontispiece of the novel that might indicate the beauty of Poynton, James called upon his memory of the Wallace Collection in London, a small museum known for its fine collection of eighteenth-century furniture that had itself engendered a long legal battle. And while working on the story in 1896, James rented Point Hill in Sussex, England, from architect Sir Reginald Blomfield for three months. Blomfield, along with others, championed England's earlier architecture over the eccentricities of the nineteenth century; he published his *History of Renaissance Architecture in England* in 1897, again the same year as James's novel.



Henry James, c. 1905.

Contemporary writings on architecture help explain the one architectural fact he reveals about Poynton: the house is Jacobean. One of the briefest of English architectural periods, it flourished for approximately the first quarter of the seventeenth century and exhibited a free encounter with classicism via the Dutch. Ruskin and others lauded the craftsmanship and individuality of this phase of the Renaissance over the later more formal Palladian classicism and certainly over the industrial production of the nineteenth century.[4] By making Poynton Jacobean, James positioned the house as a rare treasure, created before what many saw as the long decline of English taste.



James's regard for the arts fed directly into the story he shaped. The changes that he made to the title suggest how he came to see that architecture and the decorative arts could drive the story. James first worked on it in 1895 under the title *The House Beautiful*; by 1896 he changed the title to *The Old Things* (where it was published serially in the *Atlantic Monthly*); and finally in 1897 changed it yet again to *The Spoils Of Poynton* for publication as a novel. By moving from the generic to the specific, James gave Poynton an identity – made it a character – that could generate action. In his preface for the novel (written for the 1908 edition), he wrote,

> Yes, it is a story of cabinets and chairs and tables; they formed the bone of contention, but what would merely "become" of them, magnificently passive, seemed to represent a comparatively vulgar issue. The passions, the faculties, the forces their beauty would, like that of antique Helen of Troy, set in motion, was what, as a painter, one had really wanted of them, was the power in them...[5]

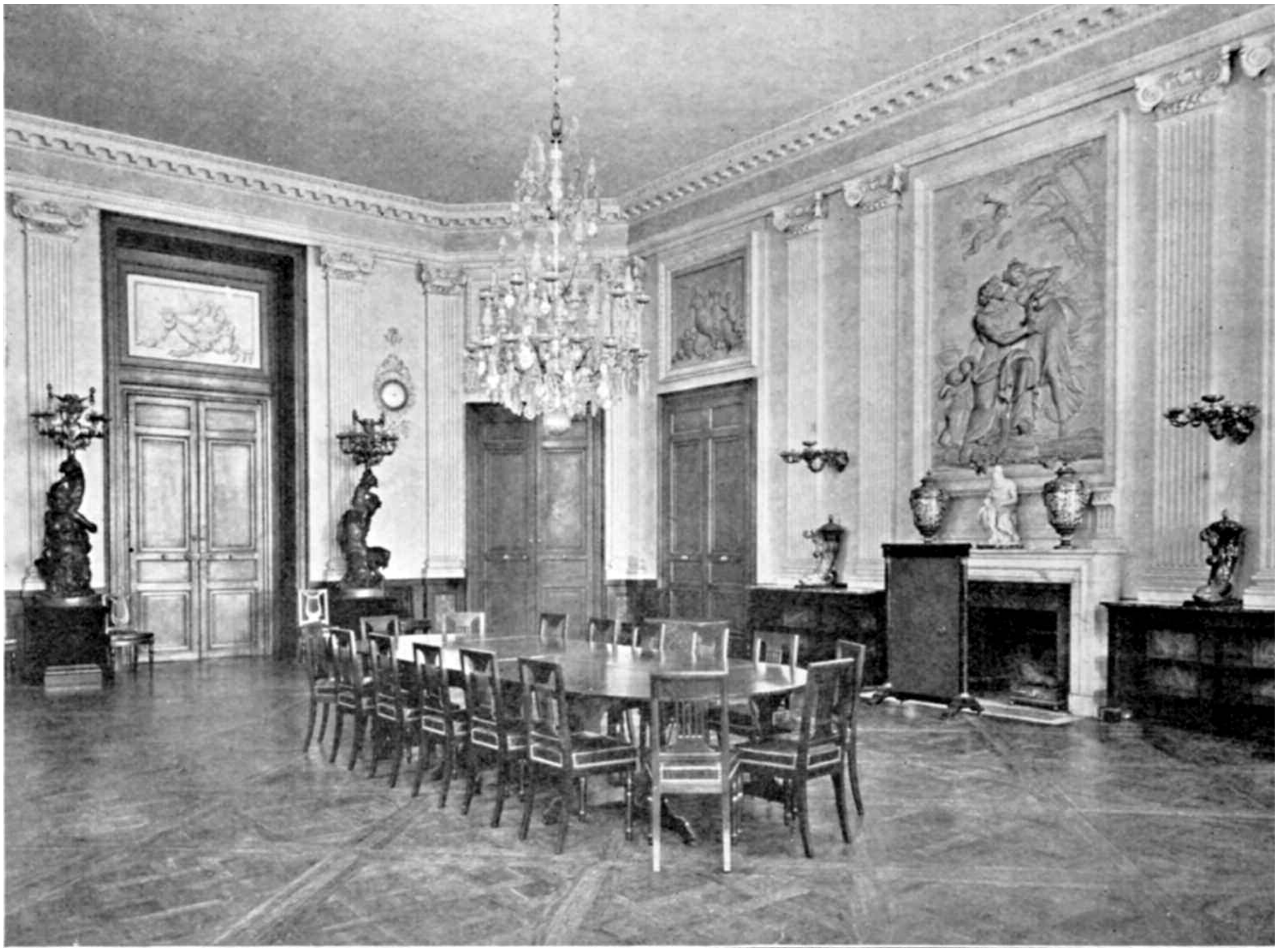
"The Things", as James repeatedly refers to the contents of Poynton, are magnificently active. They unleash the passions that carry the reader through the novel. When Owen insists on marrying Mona, Mrs. Gereth removes "the Things" from Poynton and will only return them if Owen marries Fleda; Mona threatens to break the engagement if she doesn't get the house and the Things; Owen recoils from Mona's temper and redirects his love toward Fleda; and Fleda, who loves both Owen and Poynton, will lose them both.

Poynton is the central but not the only architectural space in the novel. James creates four others: Ricks (the dower house intended for Mrs. Gereth), Waterbath (the home of Mona Brigstock), Fleda's father's flat, and Fleda's sister's house. All of these architectural spaces become the means through which the characters understand each other, and how we in turn understand them.

That James thought of his characters in terms of the architecture is further suggested by the genesis of the plot. He got the idea for the story from a dinner party he attended in 1893. In the course of conversation he learned of a mother who refused to vacate the family house for her son and his new bride, which resulted in a legal battle. Dismissing the personal details as "ugly" and "sordid," he quickly latched instead onto the idea that architecture could provoke such passion, and in the same entry he quickly mapped out the plot for a story.

He writes that the mother in the story (the unnamed Mrs. Gereth) must be a proud woman with taste and that the fiancée must come from "a tasteless, a hideous house; the kind of house the very walls and furniture of which constitute a kind of anguish for such a woman as I suppose the mother to be."[6] James retrieved this idea for the finished novel, which opens at a weekend house party at Waterbath, home of the intended bride, Mona Brigstock. Waterbath, we read, "was bad in all conscience":

> [The Brigstocks] had smothered it with trumpery ornament and scrapbook art, with strange excrescences and bunchy draperies, with gimracks that might have been keepsakes for maid-servants and nondescript



French furniture illustrated in Wharton and Codman's *The Decoration of Houses*.

> conveniences that might have been prizes for the blind. They had gone wildly astray over carpets and curtains; they had an infallible instinct for disaster, and were so cruelly doom-ridden that it rendered them almost tragic...

The abundant wallpaper was bad enough but "[t]he worst horror was the acres of varnish, something advertised and smelly, which with everything was smeared..."[7] Waterbath is a Victorian house, a product of the Industrial Revolution, and the reference to varnish provides a clear indication of the Brigstocks' nouveau-riche status: the furniture is all obviously new, not family heirlooms, and purchased on the whim of fashion, not of taste.

Waterbath generates action and defines character from the start. The very hideousness of the house sparks the friendship of Mrs. Gereth and Fleda. Independently seeking refuge from its ugliness, both have escaped outside of the house and into the garden. Eyeing each other hesitantly, they soon recognize they are kindred aesthetes and immediately form the bond that will unite them through the novel.

Waterbath has offended the taste of Mrs. Gereth and Fleda. But their taste is no mere snobbishness – Mrs. Gereth has literally been kept up all night by the wallpaper. Both women feel beauty, and its opposite, viscerally. This character type in James's earlier novels of the 1870s and 1880s has connections with the writings of Walter Pater and Aestheticism, but by the 1890s and this novel, James might have called on an additional source. With the rise of psychology, the theory of empathy had become quite fashionable. Empathy theorists argued that the aesthetic sense relied on actual physical sensation – sensation that might be tactile as well as visual. James's brother William had argued insistently for the primacy of sensation as a means of cognition in his *Principles of Psychology* of 1890. The "James-Lange Theory of Emotions" served as the basis for writers on aesthetics such as Henry James's contemporary Vernon Lee. Lee's essay "Beauty and Ugliness," published contemporaneously with James's novel, offered a description of an empathetic response to an object: "We realize bulk by breathing backwards and forwards in longer and shorter breaths."[8] This very physical reaction to beauty (or ugliness) gave architecture and furniture a living intensity. Twice in the novel James makes clear that Mrs. Gereth's concern for Poynton was not spurred by the "crude love of possession." Instead, as Mrs. Gereth herself proclaims, "Blindfold, in the dark, with the brush of a finger, I could tell one from another. They're living things to me; they know me, they return the touch of my hand." In his preface, James himself referred to the "felt beauty" of Poynton.[9]

Mrs. Gereth's love of Poynton finds its equal in Fleda. Within three minutes of entering the house on her first visit, she has sunk on to a seat with a "soft gasp and a roll of dilated eyes." She bursts into tears, the "usual sign of her submission to perfect beauty." Like Mrs. Gereth, her appreciation is not just visual but also tactile. She reaches out to "finger fondly the brasses that Louis Quinze might have thumbed, to sit with Venetian velvets just held in a loving palm...."[10] The week she spends wandering the halls of Poynton is the happiest of her life.

James dramatically contrasts Fleda's sensuous bond to Poynton with Mona's reaction. Owen brings Mona for a visit before he proposes, hoping to use the house and its contents as an enticement. Mrs. Gereth gives Mona a tour of Poynton in the course of which Mona does not say one word. In contrast to Fleda's dilated eyes, "Mona met intense looks, however, with eyes that might have been blue beads....Emotionless amidst the beautiful objects, Mona only concedes, chapters later and through Owen, that "They're alright." She reveals her own architectural aspirations in two comments to Fleda: she likes billiard rooms and she wants a winter garden. The winter garden, in contrast to the grace of Poynton, conjures up for Fleda "something glazed and piped, on iron pillars, with untidy plants and cane sofas; a shining excrescence on the noble face of Poynton." Mona's interest in the contents of Poynton is the crude love of possession – they mean nothing to her aesthetically, but she won't marry Owen without them.

Poynton does more, however, than provide a litmus test for aesthetic sensibility. Its beauty also draws out the moral character of its occupants. Scholars have commented that James does not provide a detailed description of Poynton and its contents – only that it is Jacobean, it contains Louis Quinze brasses, a Maltese cross, Louis Seize bedroom furniture, and no wallpaper. And yet James tells readers what they need to know in relation to the characters. Poynton's beauty lies in its perfect composition:

> There were places much grander and richer, but there was no such complete work of art....There had been in the first place the exquisite old house itself, early Jacobean, supreme in every part: it was a provocation, an inspiration, a matchless canvas for the picture.[11]

The composition of house and contents sets Poynton apart, not the individual items. James's insistence on this feature carried through to his own instructions to Coburn for the frontispiece photograph; he asked Coburn to take the shot obliquely "with as much of the damask on the wall as possible" thus allowing the wall to serve as the "canvas" for the objects.[12] The integration of architecture and objects reinforces James's awareness of contemporary architectural trends. Wharton and Codman opened *The Decoration of Houses* with the unequivocal aim to reform current taste. The first sentence of the book offered a choice to the reader: "Rooms may be decorated in two ways: by a superficial application of ornament totally independent of structure, or by means of those architectural features which are part of the organism of every house, inside and out."[13] Waterbath is an example of the first way. James allowed that the house itself "might have passed if they had only let it alone." Overloaded with gimcracks by the Brigstocks, Waterbath lacks integration. Poynton represents the second way. The house and its contents have become one entity, a significant point that James repeats through many voices in the novel and which will become central to Fleda's actions.

Mrs. Gereth created the entity. Her skill, her gift, rests in her ability to compose. Her character is revealed to readers through Poynton and its objects: "What Mrs. Gereth had achieved was indeed an exquisite work; and in such an art of the treasure-hunter, in selection and comparison refined to that point, there was an element of creation, of personality." James's emphasis on Mrs. Gereth's skill at composition contrasts directly to the

French armchair, Louis XV period, illustrated in Wharton and Codman's *The Decoration of Houses*.

character of the Brigstocks. The ugliness of Waterbath is attributed to "the abnormal nature of the Brigstocks, from whose composition the principle of taste had been extravagantly omitted." Mrs. Gereth has taste and an unwillingness to compromise. And yet, as Poynton also draws out, her world is limited to conceiving only of "Things": "Things were of course the sum of the world; only for Mrs. Gereth the sum of the world was rare French furniture and Oriental china. She could at a stretch imagine people's not having, but she couldn't imagine their not wanting and not missing." Her love of things has, in fact, supplanted a love of people. She can, for example, only conceive of Mona through architecture: "She would have to give up Poynton, and give it up to a product of Waterbath – that was the wrong that rankled...."[14] Throughout the novel, she refers to Fleda as a thing – Fleda is one of her greatest finds, a treasure. When she discovers that Fleda actually loves Owen, she crassly throws her at him in such a tasteless way that Fleda marvels that Mrs. Gereth could hold her (Fleda's) dignity so cheap. And it becomes quite clear that Mrs. Gereth has no real human love for her son, Owen, whom she refers to as a donkey more often than not. All of Mrs. Gereth's tasteless acts in the novel are directed at people.

In making Poynton, in gathering her spoils from European excursions, she has in fact despoiled her own humanity. And Poynton again provides the evidence: "Poynton was the record of a life. It was written in great syllables of colour and form, the tongues of other countries, and the hands of rare artists. It was all France and Italy, with their ages composed to rest." James's use of the phrase "composed to rest" and in another place his reference to the shrouds on the furniture underscore that Mrs. Gereth sees the house as a museum and herself as its curator. She has favored the preservation of objects over human relationships. It is surely no accident that James has Owen refer to Mrs. Gereth as "Mummy" throughout the novel. To thwart Mona, Mrs. Gereth disrupts the entity she has created: she steals the entire contents and has them moved to the dower house, Ricks, hoping that without the furniture Mona will break the engagement.

Fleda serves as the necessary counter to Mrs. Gereth's rampant aestheticism. "Almost as much as Mrs. Gereth her taste was her life, but her life was somehow the larger for it." Larger because her aestheticism includes an appreciation not just for objects but for the beautiful, well-composed human being. James did not initially include Fleda in his plot for the story, and yet he soon realized, with "a dim sense," that anything fine in the novel would come through her.[15] Not insignificantly, Fleda is the one person in the novel with no architectural space of her own:

> Fleda, with her mother dead, hadn't so much even as a home, and her nearest chance of one was [with her sister]....Her father paid some of her bills, but he didn't like her to live with him...

The difference between Fleda and Mrs. Gereth emerges when the two visit Ricks for the first time. A maiden aunt had lived at Ricks; she liked wallpaper, knickknacks, and potted geraniums. While Mrs. Gereth soundlessly moans over the doors –

> The thing in the world she most despised was the meanness of the single flap.

Fleda senses the presence of the maiden aunt:

> She would have adored the maiden aunt....The poor lady had had some tender little story...

Just as she senses the life in the objects of Poynton, she senses the life of the aunt. Ricks is the story, not the record, of a life, and in that way alive, not a museum. Mrs. Gereth remains immune to the aunt; when Fleda is moved to say,

> she was so sure [the maiden aunt] had deeply suffered.

Mrs. Gereth can only reply in terms of the tasteless décor:

> "I'm sure I hope she did!"

This ability of Fleda's to sense individuals through objects and architecture carries through to her relationship with Owen. She is the only one who loves him for who he is. His name itself indicates his unenviable position: Mrs. Gereth, who loves things more than people, refuses to "own" him; Mona only wants to "own" him like she wants to own Poynton, as a possession (her surname, Brigstock, provides a double wordplay on prison). When Mrs. Gereth invites Fleda to Ricks after she has removed the maiden aunt's things and installed the contents of Poynton, Fleda initially succumbs to Mrs. Gereth's ability to yet again compose houses and objects: "her passion for beauty leaped back into life." And yet, that night, she cannot sleep – not because of the wallpaper, but because of a moral wrong. Despite the "sweetest Louis Seize" bedchamber, she lies awake: "In the watches of the night she saw Poynton dishonoured; she had cared for it as a happy whole, she reasoned, and the parts of it now around her seemed to suffer like chopped limbs." James returns here to his theme of unity or composition between Poynton and its objects. Fleda's contemplation of Poynton leads her to a contemplation of Owen: the "gaps and scars" created at Poynton are the gaps and scars on Owen's honor. If Owen can't provide what he promised Mona he will be dishonored. Fleda resolves to restore honor to both Poynton and Owen by getting Mrs. Gereth to return the things. Poynton draws out Fleda's passion for honor.

Fleda's sense of honor is immediately tested. Owen begins to fall in love with her. He hints that if Mummy refuses to return the furniture Mona will break the engagement and set him free. Mrs. Gereth wants Owen to marry Fleda and tells her she would happily return the furniture to Poynton for her. All Fleda has to do is tell Mrs. Gereth to hold onto "the Things" and she can have both Owen and Poynton. But she will not do that – instead, she works even harder to get them restored. Why? In words that refer to Poynton but that can easily be applied to Owen, she realizes,

> She couldn't care for such things when they came to her in such ways; there was a wrong about them all that turned them to ugliness.

She can't care for beautiful things when obtained falsely, and she can't care for Owen if obtained falsely. Without his honor he would literally turn ugly to her. James reinforces this play between the perception of things and people – that beautiful things and people can become ugly and vice versa – with his choice of spaces. Two of the most intimate conversations between Owen and Fleda take place in the ugliest of spaces. In her father's flat, with its collection of "old brandy flasks and matchboxes, old calendars and pen-wipers and ashtrays," Fleda convinces Owen that his honor must be retained; in her sister's "mean little house," the two openly declare their love for one another. To align the restored beauty of Poynton with a restored Owen, then, Fleda must take a chance. She must send Owen back to Mona and hope that Mona will release him from the engagement.

And here Mrs. Gereth makes her fatal mistake: never dreaming that Fleda would not take advantage of Owen's wavering affection for Mona to obtain Poynton, she has the furniture returned to Poynton as a final bribe for Fleda. Mona hears of the restoration and marries Owen immediately at the Registrar. The result of this has a predictable effect on Mrs. Gereth and Fleda. Because Mrs. Gereth has only ever thought of life in terms of "the Things," their loss to Mona quenches her passion to live; she is described as lifeless and without energy. And even when she begins to perceive what she can learn from Fleda, James still gives Mrs. Gereth "lusterless eyes." Fleda on the other hand, after an initial shock, can sincerely claim, "I'm happy." Her taste for the beautiful – the harmonious entity of Poynton and its contents, the harmony of Owen and his honor – have been restored. Fleda alone recognizes that neither objects nor people can become possessions. Thinking of the things at Poynton, she reflects,

> They were nobody's at all – too proud, unlike base animals and humans, to be reducible to anything so narrow. It was Poynton that was theirs; they had simply recovered their own. The joy of that for them was the source of the strange peace in which the girl found herself floating."[16]

Fleda's joy, for Poynton and Owen, reinforce the largeness of her taste that will carry her through the tragedy of the novel's last paragraphs. Mona, with her possession of Poynton and Owen now legalized, has whisked Owen off to Europe and left Poynton unoccupied. Owen contacts Fleda once; he writes a letter with the offer of a gift. He invites Fleda to take from Poynton the most precious object. For Fleda, given the correlation of Poynton with Owen, he has in effect offered her a part of himself. Fleda goes down to Poynton to make her choice but arrives too late. As she disembarks onto the railway platform, the stationmaster tells her that Poynton is "gone." The house and its contents, left unguarded, have succumbed to negligence; a misplaced lantern has sparked a fire, and in a stiff December gale, the whole house went up in flames.

James sets the last scene of the novel on the railway platform, an open architectural space of change and movement. It is on the platform that Fleda has her final realization:

> Fleda by this time knew in what way she was affected: she became limp and weak again: she felt herself give everything up.

This moment contrasts directly with her first visit to Poynton when she became limp and weak and sank onto a seat with a slight gasp. But now she realizes all she has lost:

> Mixed with the horror, with the kindness of the stationmaster, with the smell of cinders and the riot of sound, was the raw bitterness of a hope that she might never again in life have to give up so much at such short notice.

Fleda has loved Poynton and Owen unconditionally and now they are gone to her forever. Giving them up is the last passion the house and its objects will elicit from her. James however, gives his heroine the last word in the novel. Her sense of beauty has been shaken to the core, but she remains "the larger for it." Fleda, whose aesthetic sense always transcended "the Things," and who has never had a space of her own, must move on. Still on the open platform, she inquires about return trains to London and, covering her face with her hands, tells the stationmaster, "I'll go back."

This article is dedicated to Dr. Edward J. Cronin, with whom I first read *The Spoils of Poynton*.

Notes

1. Henry James, Preface, *The Spoils of Poynton* (New York: Scribners, 1908), pp. viii and xii. Hereafter, Preface. See also Ellen Frank, *Literary Architecture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) and Peter Betjemann, *Talking Shop: The Language of Craft in an Age of Consumption* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011) for a further development of this concept in James' work.
2. See for example, Jonathan Freedman, *Professions of Taste: Henry James, British Aestheticism, and Commodity* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990); Viola Winner, *Henry James and the Visual Arts* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1970); Susan Casteras, "'The Prime Hours of First – and Subsequent – Initiations': Henry James on Pre-Raphaelite Art and Artists," *The Henry James Review* 23 (2002): 304-317; Adeline Tintner, *The Museum World of Henry James* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986); and Tintner, *Henry James and the Lust of the Eyes: Thirteen Artists in His Work* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993).

3. James, Preface, p. ix.
4. For the Jacobean period and its revival at the end of the nineteenth century, see Timothy Mowl, *Elizabethan and Jacobean Style* (London: Phaidon, 1993).
5. James, Preface, p. xiii. James continued about “the sharp light it might project on that most modern of our current passions, the fierce appetite for the upholsterer’s and joiner’s and brazier’s work, the chairs and tables, the cabinets and presses, the material odds and ends, of the more labouring ages….[T]he diffusion of this curiosity and this avidity, and full of suggestion, clearly, as to their possible influence on other passions and other relations.” p. ix. See also Bill Brown, “A Thing About Things: The Art of Decoration in the Work of Henry James,” *The Henry James Review* 23, no. 3 (2002): 222-232. Brown writes: “Whereas James often records the impressions that people leave on objects, *The Spoils of Poynton* records the impressions that things leave on people.” p. 230.
6. Matthiessen, F.O., ed., *The Notebooks of Henry James* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961): p. 137.
7. James, *The Spoils of Poynton*, 1897 (New York: Penguin Modern Classics, 1983): 7-8. Hereafter, *TSOP*. Page number for quotations from this edition will be cited within the text.
8. Lee, Vernon, “Beauty and Ugliness,” in *Beauty and Ugliness and Other Studies In Psychological Aesthetics* (London: John Lane, 1912): p. 214. James knew Lee but they had had a falling out by this time.
9. In the Preface, he writes with the concreteness of hindsight: “The real centre, as I say, the citadel of the interest, with the fight waged around it, would have been the felt beauty and value of the prize of battle, the Things, always the splendid things…” p. xii. See also Thomas Otten, *The Spoils of Poynton and the Properties of Touch*, American Literature, v.71, n.2 (June 1999): 263-290.
10. James, *TSOP*, p. 19. See also p. 52.
11. James, *TSOP*, p. 11.
12. Quoted in Betjemann, p. 208, who provides an informative discussion both of the Wallace Collection and James’s refusal to describe the individual items at Poynton.
13. Wharton and Codman, *The Decoration of Houses*. Introduction. “The vulgarity of current decoration has its source in the indifference of the wealthy to architectural fitness.” See also Brown, pp. 226-7 and p. 230 who explains the lack of detail as an example of decorating credos of the day.
14. James, *TSOP*, p. 13. Fleda, by the end of the novel, is herself aware of this fatal flaw: she “observed how characteristically [Mrs. Gereth] looked at Maggie’s possessions before looking at Maggie’s sister.” p. 171.
15. Matthieson, F.O. ed., *The Notebooks*, p. 199.
16. James, *TSOP*, p. 170.

Preservation Diary

Ragdale and Chicago as the Axis Mundi *of Modern Architecture*

WARREN ASHWORTH

Every year the Victorian Society in America gives awards for outstanding merit in preservation with particular emphasis on faithful and accurate restorations of American architecture built during the Victorian era. Foremost among the honorees in 2013 was the restoration of Ragdale in Illinois, now the centerpiece of an artist's colony, designed in 1897 by Howard Van Doren Shaw. The house is a superb example of pure Arts and Crafts design but, more than that, it sent across the Atlantic a clear announcement that America, and specifically Chicago – not New York or Newport – was a locus of modernist design on a par with that of the British luminaries Edwin Lutyens and Charles Voysey, preeminent English Arts and Crafts architects.

Howard Van Doren Shaw, born in Chicago in 1869, was two years old when the Great Chicago Fire destroyed almost the entire city, an event that colored his entire career. Shaw studied architecture at Yale and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; a year after graduating he went on a two-month tour of England and Scotland. This was but the first of his many extended trips to Europe. His travel journals, now in the possession of the Lake Forest College Archive, exhibit particular interest in the latest in modern building trends and architectural movements there.[1] Despite his Eastern education and European exposure, Chicago always drew Shaw back and he never practiced or lived anywhere else – perhaps because Chicago had by then become a world center of modern architecture. In 1891, when he returned home, he went to work at one of the firms responsible for that honor – Jenney and Mundie.[2] William Le Baron Jenney was renowned for his early innovations in skyscraper design, and his office was an incubator for some of the most prominent architects of the modern movement including Frank Lloyd Wright, Daniel Burnham, William Holabird, Martin Roche and Louis Sullivan.

Howard Van Doren Shaw
(1869 - 1926)

How did Chicago become so important so fast? Anyone who has spent a few winter days in Chicago might wonder why the early settlers did not leave after the first thaw. As it often is with the great cities of the world, the answer lies in the confluence of commerce and geography – and geography is destiny. Rome is located where the Tiber became unnavigable; London grew where the deep Thames turns into shoals; New York and San Francisco located themselves where natural deep-water harbors were set in from otherwise inhospitable coasts. Chicago's destiny was evident to even the United States Congress as early as 1814:

> By the Illinois River it is probable that Buffalo, in New York, may be united with New Orleans by inland navigation, through lakes Erie, Huron and Michigan and down the river to the Mississippi. What a route! How stupendous the idea! How dwindles the importance of the artificial canals of Europe compared with this water communication. If it should ever take place – and it is said that the opening could easily be made – the territory of Illinois will become the seat of an immense commerce and a market for commodities of all regions.[3]

The short Illinois and Michigan Canal, running from Chicago to LaSalle-Peru, Illinois, which opened the Great Lakes to the port of New Orleans and also to the West, was inaugurated in 1841, and the concurrent arrival of the railroads sealed Chicago's future as America's commercial nexus. Well before the Great Fire of 1871, Chicago's grid of broad streets soon spawned new and radical ways of erecting buildings. The first of these, balloon framing, was invented there 1833 by Augustine Deodat Taylor.[4] This fast, simple and sure method of building with lightweight standard-sized lumber of two-by-fours and six-by-eights was to lead to a revolution in house design, inviting and facilitating construction of the complex geometries that bloomed in the Victorian age. A mere forty years later, in 1883, William Le Baron Jenney's design for the steel and iron framed Home Insurance headquarters in Chicago became the first tall building

Ragdale, in Lake Forest, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. Designed by Howard Van Doren Shaw, completed in 1898. Photo by Dave Burk.

whose exterior was not load-bearing but rather a lightweight skin of masonry, a curtain wall. In its fever to build new, in new ways with new values, Chicago was leading the way in innovation in American architecture.

Concurrently, in mid-century, great advances in the expansion of the railroads increasingly made Chicago not only the commercial fulcrum of the continent but also the progenitor of some of the world's first planned suburban communities accessed by train: Evanston, Lake Forest, Oak Park and Frederick Law Olmsted's famous Riverside were all developed in the 1860s to satisfy the demand for middle- and upper-middle-class domestic architecture on a vast scale.

Shaw’s drawing from one of his own scrapbooks showing the influence of Lutyens and Voysey on his designs.

In 1898, the year Ragdale was built, Paris was the center of Western culture, London was the center of world trade, New York was the capital of commerce, and – while most Europeans and New Yorkers might have laughed it off a few years before – Chicago had emerged as a world center of modern architecture and city planning. Like the rebirth of Florence in the fifteenth century after devastating wars and the Black Death in the 1300s, the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 presented an extraordinary opportunity to a city long known for its culture of invention. By the time Shaw was taking up his career twenty years later, the developers of Chicago had recognized the vast opportunity that lay before it and was fast rebuilding, horizontally and vertically.

Shaw left Jenney and Mundie in 1895 to open his own office, where he promptly began designing everything from skyscrapers to houses. His distinctive personal style varied from the classical to the modern depending on the client’s sensibilities but the house he chose to build for himself and his family in suburban Lake Forest was in the most up-to-date idiom, Arts and Crafts.

Shaw’s initial enthusiasm for the Arts and Crafts style may have been a result of his trips to England or it may have been from reading the journals of the day, or both.

Virginia Greene, in her biography of Shaw, notes that "Many of Shaw's books reveal his love of detail in Scottish and English architecture and decoration. These include *Details of Scottish Domestic Architecture*, by the Edinburgh Architectural Association; [and] *Measured Drawings of Old Oak English Furniture*, by John W. Hurrell."[5] According to the Historic Structures Report on Ragdale, we know that Shaw kept an extensive library of books and periodicals, including *Country Life* and, later, *Architectural Record*. "He had a custom of clipping illustrations of buildings by other architects and mounting them in scrapbooks. Illustrations found in these books include one of the front entrances of St. Mary, East Grinstead, by E. L. Lutyens. A sketch (undated) found in one of Shaw's sketchbooks shows the influence Lutyens' work had upon him."

Ragdale was occupied by Shaw and his family until his death in 1926, and during that time became a renowned workshop for artists. The house and its outbuildings and barns continued to be used by artist members of his family including his daughter, sculptor Sylvia Shaw Judson (1897-1978), and his granddaughter, the poet Alice Judson Hayes (1922–2006), until 1976.

In that year, Hayes organized The Ragdale Foundation as a not-for-profit institution dedicated to "providing a place of rest and relaxation for artists of all disciplines." At that time, she ran it almost single-handedly, performing all administrative duties as well as cooking and mentoring.[6]

In 1986 Alice Judson Hayes donated the house and grounds to the City of Lake Forest, Illinois, in an effort to guarantee their long-term upkeep and alleviate the crushing annual $90,000.00 property tax bill. In exchange, The Ragdale Foundation was granted a ninety-nine year lease from the city, and it operates the artists' community in cooperation with Lake Forest and the Open Lands Association.

Image cut out from *Country Life Magazine* and pasted into Shaw's scrapbook of Lutyen's Barton St. Mary, East Grinstead house.

"Bird Girl" by Howard Van Doren Shaw's daughter, sculptor Sylvia Shaw Judson.

Ragdale continued to thrive as an arts community (giving grants for residencies to as many as sixteen artists at a time) until 2011 when it the building was vacated temporarily as the Board of Directors decided the time had come for a major restoration and renovation. The work took about twelve months and was finished in 2012. The cost was approximately 3.2 million dollars with funds coming from a combination of private donations and municipal funding.

The architect in charge of the restoration was Walker Johnson, FAIA, of the Chicago firm of Johnson Lasky Architects. Johnson has a significant preservation pedigree, having served three terms on the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council to the State Historic Preservation Office; he was active in the creation of Landmarks Illinois and eventually served as president; he was a fellow of the Association of Preservation Technology as well as a fellow of the American Institute of Architects; and he is active in the Victorian Society of America. He has a long relationship with Ragdale itself, is a past president of its board and has been closely associated with improvements on the campus for decades. He was instrumental in getting it placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The renovation of the house had particular challenges associated with the integration of a fully functioning artists' colony inside what had been a private house. These included issues such as turning the ground floor entertaining rooms into legal places of assembly with all the exits, signage and fire protection that this entails. Meg Kindelin, project architect for Ragdale with Johnson Lasky Architects, explained that the "date of significance" for the house was chosen to be 1926, the year of Shaw's death, because he was making modifications right up to the end, including new wings, sleeping porches and interior redecoration. As detailed in the Historic Structures Report, the house was organized into the following spaces.

> Primary Historic Spaces
> spaces to be fully restored
>
> Secondary Historic Spaces
> spaces to be maintained in the period of significance
>
> Tertiary Historic Spaces
> spaces available for adaptive re-use.
>
> Support Spaces
> spaces adapted as required to fit the program.

These allotments allowed the architects to find places for eight bathrooms in a house that originally had only one, as necessitated by the dormitory requirements of the program.

Other aspects of the restoration included reinforcement of the roof rafters, restoration of all the wood windows including reuse of the original window glass, reproduction of period wallpapers, repair and restoration of the exterior stucco and foundation, and significant new mechanical systems throughout the house with plumbing and fire alarms being the most challenging to locate discreetly. The existence of excellent photographs of the interior taken around 1900 proved exceptionally useful in addressing finishes and furniture and helping establish where changes had been made to accommodate new heating systems or new decorating fashions over the decades.

Ragdale, an American pinnacle of the International Arts and Crafts style, may not be what the average American thinks of as Victorian but, importantly, it reminds us that the Victorian period witnessed the birth of modernism. Its preservation has made available for the next generations an excellent example of the flowering of modernism in the Chicago area and an opportunity to continue the conversation about its roots

(Top to bottom): Orchards, Surrey, England. Designed by Edwin Lutyens, 1899. Munstead Wood, the house Lutyens designed for his friend and collaborator, Gertrude Jekyll, in 1897. C. F. A. Voysey designed this similarly named house, The Orchard, 1899.

Notes

1. Virginia A. Greene, *The Architecture of Howard Van Doren Shaw*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1998, p. 35.
2. Jenney had other earlier partnerships. This was the new name of the firm as of 1891.
3. *The Niles Register*, August 6, 1814.
4. Walker Field. "A Reexamination into the Invention of the Balloon Frame." *Journal of the American Society of Architectural Historians* (October 1942).
5. Greene, p. 34.
6. Historic Structures Report compiled by the office of Johnson Lasky Architects, 2008.

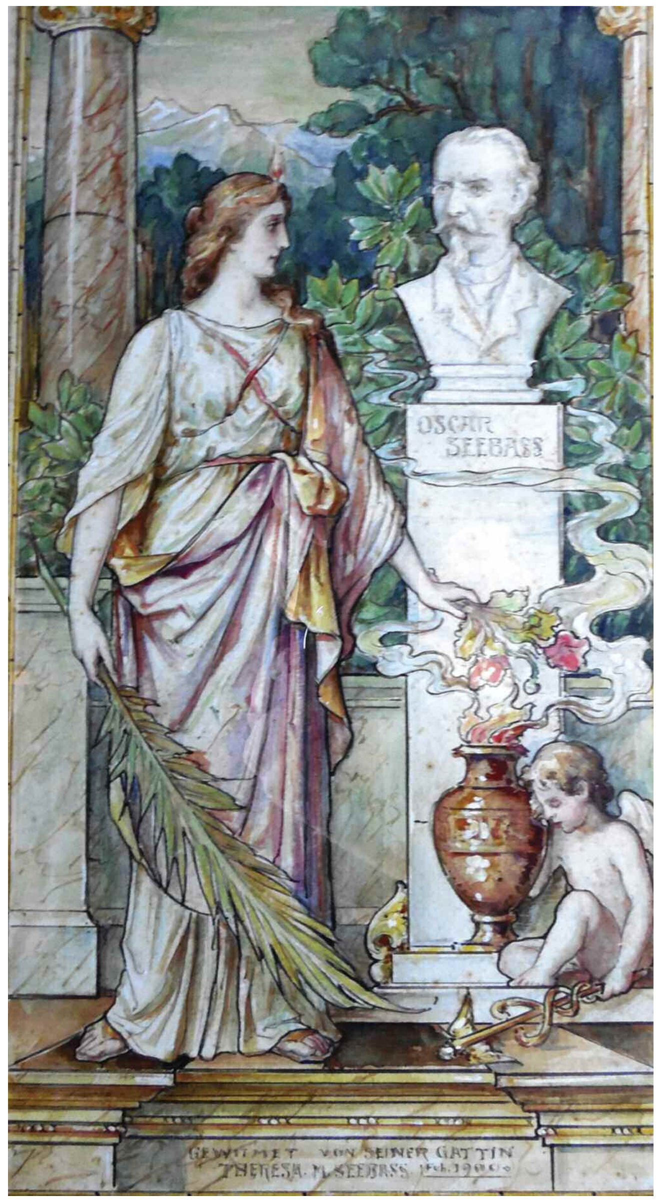
Art-Historical Sleuthing

The Case of the Seebass Memorial

JAMES F. O'GORMAN

On a drive through New England in the fall of 1992 I attended a Saturday afternoon auction held at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, by the (apparently now defunct) Young Fine Arts Gallery of South Berwick, Maine. After sitting bored for most of the time I suddenly had the unexplained urge to bid on an unsigned ink and watercolor drawing that seemed to be a cartoon for a turn-of-the-last-century stained glass window. I thought it looked better than much of the stuff that passed the block that day. Such a sudden urge at an auction can often prove a costly mistake, but I walked off with the drawing well below the house's low estimate. At the very least I had an attractive so-called "American School" wall ornament at a reasonable price. And for the next two decades it was just that. I would glance at it in passing from time to time and promise myself I would one day look into it.

When I stopped for more than a glance, this is what I saw: a matted and framed drawing in two parts. The larger (roughly 13 by 7 inches) is a scene of a classical marble portico on which stands a pedestal with the bust of a man sporting a Van Dyke beard. His name is given as OSCAR / SEEBASS. At the foot of the pedestal an apparently sleeping putto rests his head on a flaming urn in the shape of an amphora while laying a caduceus on the pavement. Smoke from the urn rises sinuously to encompass the name of the deceased. The principal figure is that of a classically draped standing female, her head in profile, with a small flame emerging from her forehead. She holds a palm frond in her right hand and in her left dangles a bunch of poppies over the flame from the urn. Beyond a pair of classical columns a leafy copse opens to reveal a mountainous landscape with snow-capped peaks. An inscription below the pavement reads "GEWIDMET VON SEINER GATTIN / THERESA M. SEEBASS 1 Feb. 1900." On a small, separate sheet (roughly 2½ by 6 inches) at another opening in the mat is a swag-draped placard seemingly intended for a transom above the main memorial. It is inscribed "IN MEMORY OF / OSCAR SEEBASS / Born 27 Spt 1835 Died 1 Feb 1896." Over time my glances in passing had spied the caduceus and I had decided that Seebass had been a medical doctor. What a bad piece of iconographical analysis that was!



Unknown artist. Cartoon for Oscar Seebass Memorial Window, United States Cremation Company, Fresh Pond, Long Island, 1900. Author's Collection.

This year, with other chores momentarily out of the way, I decided to investigate the case of the Seebass Memorial, for even my slight examination of the drawing told me that I had been right in thinking it was that when I bought it. Such funerary emblems as palm fronds, poppies, and flaming urn all pointed to the triumph of the spirit over the flesh symbolized also by the smoke emerging from the urn to encircle the deceased's name. The caduceus (rightly read) referred to Mercury, guide of the dead. But questions remained: Who was Seebass; where had he lived; what had he done to leave a relict sufficiently wealthy to order such a memorial? What to make of the widow's German dedication? Where was the window intended to go? And of course, who was the artist and/or glass maker? Some, but alas not all, of the answers to these questions appear below.

The first step: place the work geographically. Although I had found the image in New England there was no guaranty that Mr. Seebass had lived in that area. Auction lots might come from anywhere. I had first to identify him. With such an unusual name that proved easy. Through the portal of Google and the database of American Historical Newspapers I quickly found several obituaries published when he died at age 60. The best of them, in the *New York Herald* for 3 February 1896, called him a "wealthy silk manufacturer...born in Germany... [who] owned a controlling interest in the Cedar Cliff Silk [Company] Mills, at Haledon, a suburb of Paterson," New Jersey. And, it added, he was considered "one of the most experienced silk manufacturers in the country." I had to look up Paterson to learn that it is twenty miles from Manhattan and during the late nineteenth century rivaled Manchester, Connecticut, in the production of silk in this country. It still sports the title "Silk City," although that industry is long gone. A much later notice called Seebass a pioneer in the business, while other newspapers noted his several crossings by liner between New York and the port of Bremen. In sum, the man had been a German immigrant and prosperous manufacturer.

Back to the drawing: before being reframed for auction it had been backed with a sheet of cardboard that was now detached but, miraculously, came with my purchase. Without it my search for the intended destination of the window executed from my watercolor would have ended before it began. That cardboard had a light pencil inscription that read (according to the version typed on a separate card by the auctioneer) "Design approved / U S C G / by Louis Lange / May 23 1900." This appeared to be a worthy clue but turned out to be briefly something of a red herring. I had Seebass but who was Louis Lange?

The description of the work in the auction catalogue quoted the dedications on the drawing and transcribed the note on its former backing. It also added the following information: "Louis Lange was a well-known German publisher in the Mid-West." That is true, but proved misleading. I quickly found a number of Louis Langes in the newspapers of around 1900. One was a workman killed in a quarry accident in St. Louis and clearly not my man. Another looked more promising, for a Louis Lange and his son of the same name published both the German-language *Die Rundschau* in Chicago and *The Illustrated Home Journal* in St. Louis. Junior was also briefly our consul in Bremen under President McKinley until relieved of his duties "as the result of an investigation by the state department into his official methods." I began to think that my design, approved by Louis Lange, was not a cartoon for a window but intended as an illustration in the *Home Journal* and that the initials U S C G stood for United States Consul General, a title that appears in the published accounts of the man's discharge. But the short-lived *Home Journal* is difficult to find, and the more I considered it the less it made sense in this connection. Why would such a Midwestern magazine aimed at the domestic market publish what was clearly not a domestic memorial to a New Jersey silk manufacturer, even if he was, like the publisher, of German origin? More important, why would that magazine's representative sign an approval using the initials of his governmental position?

Unknown architect's rendering. Original building for the United States Cremation Company, 1884-85. Courtesy of the United States Cremation Company, Fresh Pond, Long Island.

The transcriber had read those initials as U S C G, but on closer inspection I realized that the last two letters are clearly identical, and both are Cs. I returned to the database. A third Louis Lange appeared in the papers as the President of the United States Cremation Company (that is, U S C C) as well as editor and publisher of its short-lived monthly journal called *The Urn* (1892-95). This Louis Lange would have been in position to approve any windows installed in a columbarium. And, of course, the iconography of the window refers to cremation. The iconography Classical rather than Christian. The flame emerging from the woman's head refers to neither St. Jude nor the Pentecost. The glass was intended for a non-denominational setting.

(Top to bottom): Oscar Seebass memorial window, c. 1900. Artist unknown. Robert Banks Flintoff, Fanny Dreher Memorial Window, 1893. Courtesy United States Cremation Company, Fresh Pond, Long Island.

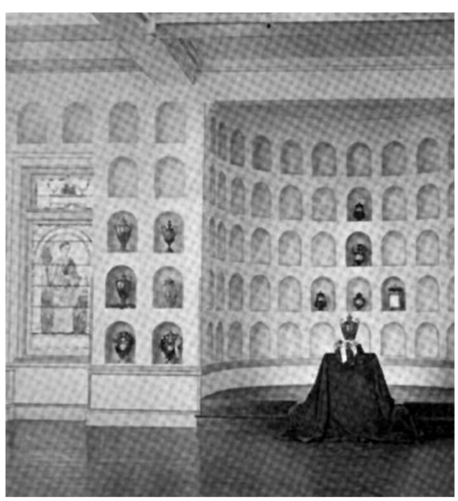
Despite the opposition of many advocates of inhumation, or burial in the earth of the body, especially that of the Roman Catholic Church, cremation and its consequential "inurnation" of the ashes, as *The Urn* would have it, as a way of disposing of the mortal remains of the dead became increasingly acceptable for some in this country in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As Stephen Prothero points out in *Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America* (2001) the first recorded "modern and scientific" cremation occurred in western Pennsylvania 1876. In the New York area, the publicly traded United States Cremation Company established a crematory and columbarium at Fresh Pond, Middle Village, Long Island, in 1884. The next year it opened its facility, designed by an architect whose name has not surfaced, using columns and other marble from the old St. Nicholas Hotel in the New York City. The *New York Herald* described the structure as an "an odd[ly] shaped, low building of red brick and white stone with a smokestack like that of a tug rising from one end." In 1892-93 the company expanded that first building into a Romanesque Revival structure with a columbarium capable of holding, according to the *New York Times*, 2500 urns in niches. German-born William H. Danmar of Brooklyn, architect, teacher, author, and so-called "ghostologist," designed the expansion. The facility has survived as greatly altered and increased in size over the years, including a 1904-05 addition by architect George Tremaine Morse, and remains now an active facility and an important historic monument.

But what had all this to do with Mr. Seebass? An article that appeared in 1893 in *The American Architect and Building News* suggested an answer. "Though New York, as having a large German population, would naturally furnish a considerable proportion of Germans to those choosing disposal by cremation, the ratio of Germans to the population is very far from accounting for their great preponderance in the crematory lists," it said. Another New York paper had the previous year noted that twenty-seven of the forty-two directors of the United States Cremation Company had German names. *The Urn* published articles in German (and French) as well as English. (Not even Prothero can adequately explain this preponderance of Teutons.) The diary of New York piano-maker William Steinway (*né* Steinweg) noted Seebass's death within twenty-four hours, a fact that suggests the latter's close association with the Manhattan German-American community. (Steinway was also a friend of Danmar, the architect.) The design of my watercolor began to come into focus. A crematorium as the site intended for a stained glass window for which it was the cartoon made great sense, for the iconography clearly pointed to disposal of remains by fire and subsequent inurnation. Maybe, just maybe, Seebass's ashes rested in a columbarium somewhere, and maybe, just maybe, there would be a window to match my drawing. I needed to canvass Eastern crematories that existed around 1900.

Given Louis Lange's position at the Fresh Pond crematory I naturally hoped it still existed and looked for and found its website. It included an invitation to the public to visit its not-for-profit columbarium and tour its Tiffany style stained glass windows. I realized that "Tiffany style" could mean anything, but I nonetheless felt my search getting warm. The site contained the email address of Joseph P. Di Troia. To him I sent a photo of my watercolor and a message asking two questions: were Seebass's ashes at the site, and was there a window matching my drawing? I considered this a shot in the dark, of course, but almost by return email I had my answer: "He is here," wrote Mr. Di Troia, and so is the window." I had with surprising speed run Oscar Seebass and his memorial to ground! His ashes and those of his wife (1841-1912) are in a handsome black urn displayed in the 1892-93 columbarium at Fresh Pond, in Niche 296 near his memorial window. That urn is identical to the one displayed on the masthead of *The Urn* where it appears between the flaming letters of the periodical's title. My chance purchase of the cartoon had led me into a whole new world of iconography.

The Seebass window is a direct copy of my cartoon with one exception. In the glass a small Latin cross appears on the urn. As Prothero points out, cremation began with a decidedly unsavory reputation and much opposition from some Christians. Other than this added nod to Christianity, the iconography, from the flame emerging from the head of the female to the flaming urn, an image combining destruction (or purification) by fire, the release of the spirit, and the final resting place of the "cremains" (in the current terminology) clearly represents cremation. *The Urn* of 25 September 1894 ran an illustrated article on "Modern Urns" all of them featuring a flaming top. I have not gone deeply into the question, but this was surely at the time a subject with little precedent in American art. That small cross added by the glass maker does nothing to alter the overwhelming allegory of immortality of the spirit after incineration that the artist embodied in my watercolor rather than the resurrection of the whole body at the end of time, a Christian belief that supported inhumation. The classical mise-en-scène of my cartoon, so typical of the Renaissance Revival of the turn of the twentieth century, also made reference to the common Greco-Roman funereal practice of ceremonial cremation often cited as precedent in *The Urn*.

At the dedication of Danmar's new columbarium, Louis Lange wrote that he would "advise those of our wealthy friends, who wish to secure the choice of a memorial window, [or] a well-located niche...to do so soon." Theresa Seebass was among the early takers. The erection of architect-designed nonsectarian columbaria ornamented with stained glass typically found in churches enhanced the solemn aura of crematory sites. In fact, the expanded building at Fresh Pond provided a non-sectarian chapel-like room for obsequies. Fresh Pond was not alone in this. The Earl Chapel and Crematory in Oakwood Cemetery at




THE URN

A MONTHLY JOURNAL
DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF CREMATION

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"THE PIOUS CARE BE OURS, THE DEAD TO BURN."—Iliad.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CREMATION.

from time to time, as prudent policy dictated, still in the main inimical to cremation. For the information more particularly of the Catholic readers of The Urn we shall follow Mr. Hogan's reasoning and make it plain where we disagree with him, and why.

"Various motives," he says, "led to the introduction and diffusion of the custom of cremation, such as the fear of contagion, or a wish to place the remains beyond the reach of desecration, or a superstitious belief in the purifying action of fire, or simply a wish to possess in innocuous form the bodies of those dear in life. Whatever the reason, the practice was very widespread in ancient times. It flourished side by side with inhumation, in Greece, in Rome, all through the vast regions of Asia, and among the barbarous tribes of northern Europe.

"But it never obtained among the Jews. Faithful to the earliest traditions of humanity and to the customs of Chaldea, the cradle of their race, they continued to the end to consign their dead to the grave,

(L to R): Urn with the cremains of Oscar Seebass (1836-1896) and Theresa Seebass (1841-1912). William H. Danmar, architect, Columbarium, c. 1895. The Fanny Dreher memorial window is visible on the left of the photo. *The Urn* journal, August 1894, published by the United States Cremation Company, Fresh Pond, Long Island

Troy, New York, 1888-89, for example, holds Tiffany & Company and Maitland Armstrong windows, although they exhibit traditional Biblical scenes (as do some of the other windows in the early Fresh Pond columbarium).

Elegant stained glass windows are among the attractions of the space for cremation ceremonies at Fresh Pond, as mentioned by *The Urn* about the time of the Seebass incineration. In the Danmar columbarium there are now six ground-floor windows. The earliest of those are the memorials to Fanny, the wife of C. W. C. Dreher, a man described in *The Urn* as current holder of the American record for superintending cremations, and Robert Bley. An obscure English-born artist named Robert Banks Flintoff (later Flintoft) (1865-1946) designed the Dreher window. It represents an attempt to depict cremation allegorically even earlier than the Seebass Memorial, and the result is awkward. Dedicated in May 1893, it shows, according to the *New York Herald-Tribune*, "a woman in Roman garb, typifying incineration," and exists today: a single figure set within an archway, standing in flames, holding a torch and an urn. Since early cremationists, including Lange, made a point of emphasizing (not always truthfully) that flames never touched the body, this would seem to be a less soothing solution to the new iconography than the Seebass design. The newspapers reported that the Dreher window represented Morning while that memorializing Bley represented Night. The two, then, suggested the course of a day or a life. Both windows are composed of drapery glass with painted facial features. Both are signed by August C. Grimm, a now little-remembered New York City stained-glass maker who advertised his services in *The Urn* and elsewhere during those years. Compared with the later Seebass Memorial, which would seem to be important as a more sophisticated early solution to the iconography of cremation, the Dreher glass is weaker in the painted facial features. On the other hand, the maker of the Seebass window used no drapery glass; it is painted throughout.

Which leaves two important questions unanswered: who drew the design approved by Louis Lange on 23 May 1900? And who made the stained glass that translated it into the memorial window? Unfortunately, once you leave the work of Louis Tiffany and John La Farge (and no one has suggested that my cartoon or the glass at Fresh Pond is by either), you are in muddy waters about stained glass design and production in this period. There were other glass designers and makers in New York, of course, men like Maitland Armstrong and Frederic Crowninshield, women like Mary Tillinghast, and still others of less lasting fame like August Grimm. That many had apprenticed with either Tiffany or La Farge makes distinguishing hands difficult.

American stained glass history is not my area of study, so I consulted some experts. Assuming that Theresa Seebass asked a local (that is, New York) stained glass designer and maker to memorialize her husband, she had several – in fact, for the historian, too many – choices. Maitland Armstrong's work of about 1900, as discussed and illustrated in Robert O. Jones's 1999 monograph on the artist, eliminated him from my thinking but let me know that there were many artists and glass makers to choose from in New York at the end of the nineteenth century. Among those till remembered today other than Armstrong and Crowninshield are J. and R. Lamb and Heinigke & Bowen. It seems that, like Grimm, Charles F. Hogeman is little remembered. The same is true of the maker who signed another of the early windows as "Zundel" in the Fresh Pond columbarium. Advertisements of the Lamb firm often targeted "cemetery work," but given the Teutonic connections of the Seebasses, I looked into the firm of Otto Heinigke and Owen J. Bowen. Heinigke was a first-generation German American influenced, like Armstrong, by the work of LaFarge. Albert Tannler is the current authority on that firm. In answer to my question whether Heinigke and Bowen could have designed and made the Seebass window, he wrote, alas, "I think it is safe to say no." Disappointing, but then negative answers provide useful information. I needed to continue my search.

Tannler pointed out that the Seebass cartoon exhibits the "academic realism" of the opalescent school of the period. I asked the authoritative stained glass consultant Julie L. Sloan about my cartoon and resultant glass. She did not recognize the artist. "There are so many it could have been...[The painted drapery] suggests a studio with German and English craftsmen but that describes most of them working at the time." So the Seebass Memorial remains an open case.

Perhaps astute scholars of American turn-of-the-last-century stained glass who read *Nineteenth Century* will be able to suggest the names of the artist and/or maker. Perhaps one of the Art History departments in the New York City area could recommend the Fresh Pond columbarium windows as a thesis topic for a Master's candidate in American decorative arts. I would welcome such help in order finally to close the case of the Seebass Memorial, and turn the drawing over to an appropriate public collection.

❇

The Seebass window is in urgent need of restoration and the Fresh Pond Crematorium seeks funds to have that done. Contact Joseph P. Di Troia at j.ditroia@verizon.net.

Thanks to Mr. Di Troia, Daniel Di Troia, Lilian Armstrong, Mary Beth Betts, Susan Danly, Maggie DeVries, Nonnie Frelinghuysen, Erica Hirshler, Julie Sloan, and Albert Tannler for help.

The Bibliophilist

Picturing Power: Portraiture and Its Uses in the New York Chamber of Commerce

Karl Kusserow, with contributions by Elizabeth Blackmar, Paul Staiti, Daniel Bluestone, and David L. Barquist. Columbia University Press, 2013.

Confronting this book, and indeed the portraits themselves (as I did one day in the lobby of the Credit Suisse building in New York City), I was tempted to dismiss the whole enterprise as nothing more than high-priced self-aggrandizement. These portraits, numbingly formulaic – men in black suits with formidable facial hair – were surely bombastic in their own day, and irrelevant in ours. I was delighted to discover that *Picturing Power* uses my prejudices as a jumping-off point to explore the role of grand-manner portraiture in Victorian America, when the noble goal of honoring self-made men bumped up against the uncomfortable realization that these men had become monarchs in a kingdom of Capitalism. The full title of this volume acknowledges this paradox, and the various essays examine various strategies that the Chamber of Commerce used in commissioning and displaying portraits in the larger project of justifying the accumulation of wealth and power in a free-enterprise system. I may not like these paintings any more now than I did before I read the book, but I do appreciate the forthright messages of the authors, and indeed the painters and the businessmen.

The preface to this volume reveals much of the backstory. After the New York Chamber of Commerce dissolved in 1980, nearly fifty significant canvases from its collection of over three hundred were purchased by the Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette Collection of Americana; a fitting transfer of the symbols of power from a defunct agent of commerce to one that was thriving. Championed by Richard Jenrette, well-known collector of art and architecture, the portraits received ad-hoc curatorial care from a long list of distinguished art historians, including Karl Kusserow, the organizational force behind this volume. Over the years DLJ became entwined with financial powerhouses AXA and then Credit Suisse, but the portraits and their archives did not languish; they were restored and housed. Support from these financial titans underlies this volume, and an accompanying exhibition that was held at Princeton University Art Museum March 9 – June 30, 2013. Although other portraits from the collection landed in the New York State Museum and in private collections, and the book and exhibition attracted other funders, neither would have been realized without the backing of Big Capital, as the book makes clear. Such candor is welcome.

Two essays by Karl Kusserow begin and end the book: "Portraiture's Use, and Disuse, at the Chamber of Commerce and Beyond" and "Memory, Metaphor and Meaning in Daniel Huntington's *Atlantic Cable Projectors*." The first essay charts the long growth and equally long stagnation of the portrait collection of the Chamber of Commerce, and its ultimate dispersal as the fortunes of the Chamber failed. The first work was commissioned from Matthew Pratt in 1771 because the newly-established Chamber wanted to honor the lieutenant governor of New York Colony who had granted them a charter of incorporation, legitimizing the organization. The last portrait, commissioned in 1972, portrayed the last president of the Chamber, and the motifs used by the painter (the president's wife) were eerily reminiscent of those used by Pratt. In between, Kusserow divides the portrait collection into epochs that correspond with the institutional phases of the Chamber and correlates their collection with the mandates of each phase; dozens of high Victorian portraits are discussed. In contrast, the last essay is a focused monograph on one painting, Daniel Huntington's group portrait of the inventors and financiers behind the laying of the Transatlantic Cable, a commercial venture of colossal scale and importance. We learn that in 1892 the ailing Cyrus Field (inventor and genius behind the cable) admitted to Huntington, the "house painter" for the Chamber, that the group portrait that the two had conceived and laid out in 1866 but abandoned due to the reluctance of some of the sitters, really would please him. The Chamber resolved to have Huntington paint the work. Kusserow notes that when *The Atlantic Cable Projectors* was unveiled, it was "billed as the accurate, life-sized rendition of a long ago meeting," though in fact it belongs to the long tradition of imaginary group portraiture. His essay explains how the painting became the most distinguished artwork in the Chamber's collection, and examines the motives of all concerned and ties them to the motifs in the painting – a superb melding of history and aesthetics.

Other essays in the book are a combination of institutional history and art analysis. Paul Staiti's "The Capitalist Portrait" explains that all the painters and the canvases used a uniform typology that conveyed a restrained simplicity – a "Protestant" aesthetic. But when massed in the Chamber's great hall, the portraits collectively conveyed "power, solidity, impenetrability and dynastic succession" much as portrait galleries always have. Elizabeth Blackmar's essay, "Exercising Power: The New York Chamber of Commerce and the Community of Interest," gives us an extended history of the institution and the parallel flourishing of American business interests. Daniel Bluestone's essay "Portraits in the Great Hall: The Chamber's 'Voice' on Liberty Street," charts the Chamber's various homes and the display of portraiture in them, showing how the Chamber learned to use both architecture and painting to represent itself. The Chamber ultimately triumphed in 1902 when it opened its building on Liberty Street, which demonstrated that men of commerce had transcended feelings of greed and self-interest to build a civic monument. David Barquist's "'The Whole Lustre of Gold': Framing and Displaying Power at the Chamber of Commerce," focuses squarely (pun intended!) on the gilt frames that surround the portraits. Though the Chamber never adopted a uniform frame style, classicizing motifs were favored. Hung together in rows, salon-style, the frames connoted republican permanence.

This book helps us understand why an association of businessmen chose a mode of portraiture that veiled the extraordinary wealth and power of any individual sitter, but then grouped many of these portraits together in a sea of gilt, in a sumptuous hall, thus telegraphing the collective wealth and power of these men. Wisely, these Victorian businessmen sought to play down individual displays of might, preferring to let the organization as a whole flex its muscle. Grand-manner portraiture of the type patronized by the Chamber of Commerce is a mode that has lost much of its authority in America. But large-scale aggrandizing portraiture is far from dead, and the relationship between art and commerce has never been healthier. After all, hedge fund mangers buy Andy Warhols and banks sponsor art fairs. We can be thankful to *Picturing Power* for giving us insights to read Victorian portraiture, and the forces behind those faces.

Reviewed by Karen Zukowski

New Eyes on America: The Genius of Richard Caton Woodville

Joy Peterson Heyrman, ed. Walters Art Museum and Yale University Press, 2012.

Among American genre painters Richard Caton Woodville is an anomaly, and not only because of his brief picaresque life. He was born in 1825 to a prosperous Baltimore family, tried and abandoned medical studies in 1844, and the following year made his way to Düsseldorf to study painting. Except for a few short trips home, he spent the rest of his life in Europe. He married twice, and may have been a bigamist. At thirty he was dead, succumbing to the "poisonous effects of an overdose of morphine, taken medicinally," according to the careful wording of his death certificate.

So we learn from *New Eyes on America: The Genius of Richard Caton Woodville*, the catalogue of a traveling exhibition organized by the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. Woodville's legacy is not large – only sixteen paintings are known, and the Walters owns eight of them – making this a catalogue raisonné, although a rather mournful one. Barring some unforeseen discovery, it will serve as the definitive resource for Woodville. Happily, it is a remarkably good catalogue.

During Woodville's tenure, the Düsseldorf *Malerschule* was one of Europe's most dynamic and fashionable schools of art and the one most eagerly sought out by aspiring American painters. Others who studied there included Albert Bierstadt, George Caleb Bingham, and Worthington Whittredge, as well as two close friends of Caton (as he was called by family and friends), Eastman Johnson and Emmanuel Leutze. Each cultivated the Düsseldorf manner: painfully tight draftsmanship, highly glossy and porcelain-like surface finish, and contrived theatrical compositions. It was not for everybody: William Morris Hunt complained that the school ran "upon the principle that the education of art-genius, of a mechanic, and of a student of science were one and the same thing, – a grinding, methodical process for the accumulation of a required skill," and promptly left it for Paris.

But Woodville stayed and prospered, shipping his paintings to the American Art Union, which engraved them for mass distribution. Their topical subject matter created instant demand; *War News from Mexico*, his triumph of 1848, was brought out in an edition of 14,000 engravings. Success encouraged imitation, and he cannily reprised the theme the following year with his *Old '76 and Young '48*, in which a young officer freshly returned from Mexico eagerly describes his escapades to a family group that includes his grandfather, a rheumy-eyed veteran of the Revolutionary War. Even skeptical Walt Whitman admired it, praising it in a review of 1850 for not "straining after effect," like so many American paintings.

For all his topicality, Woodville was unable to paint American life by direct observation as did his peers, such as Bingham, Francis Edmonds, and William Sidney Mount; from Europe, he could only draw on memory and imagination. And yet his paintings are filled with curiously tangible details. The dilapidated hotel in *War News from Mexico* (1848) is utterly believable, with its irregular clapboard walls, broken porch posts, and faded signboard that reads *American Hotel*. So too is the setting of *Old '76 and Young '48*, a meticulously recreated Baltimore dining room, its carved marble fireplace cluttered with fading relics of the Revolution. This minuteness is akin to the precision of a miniaturist, an approach that Düsseldorf encouraged but which here suggest the heightened and peculiar sharpness of a dream. Perhaps this is why Woodville, the turbulent expatriate, created some of the most emblematic images of America on the eve of the Civil War.

The catalogue brings useful insights to each of these aspects of Woodville's work. Jochen Wierich's essay "Woodville and the Düsseldorf School" shows how his chief teacher was Carl Ferdinand Sohn, the school's principal genre painter but a stickler for correct drawing of the human figure. Whether or not it was because of Sohn's tutelage or half-remembered anatomical lessons from his medical studies, Woodville avoided the exaggerated cartoonish sensibility that afflicts most American genre figure drawing.

An essay by Seth Rockman examines the Baltimore context and Woodville's family background, which had once been deeply involved in the slave trade (William Woodville, a grandfather or perhaps great-grandfather, made some 27 slaving voyages to Africa between 1766 and 1795). Where the painter's own sympathies lay remains a mystery. But he seems to have been at least somewhat progressive in his views, to judge by the way he invariably inserted sympathetic images of American Blacks into his compositions. (One wonders where he found his models in northwestern Germany.) Of course, Düsseldorf painters tended toward political liberalism, even radicalism, especially during the revolutionary year 1848. As to how far Woodville's radicalism went, again, we can only speculate. One clue comes from circumstances surrounding his celebrated *Politics in an Oyster House* (1848). When he exhibited the painting in London, he changed the title to *A New York Communist Advancing an Argument*. The overbearing way that its subject holds forth, and the expression of bemused but weary forbearance on his victim's face, hint that Woodville's sympathies are not entirely on the Communist side.

Also notable is a short chapter on technique by Eric Gordon, who has studied all of Woodville's sixteen surviving paintings through modern conservation science, including x-radiation and gas chromatography. It is unusual that an artist's complete body of known work has been examined scientifically, and it is not the sort of technical matter that one typically finds in an exhibition catalogue. But it is reassuring to see that science confirms precisely what we would expect to see in Woodville's work: beginner's uncertainty and indecision in his pre-Düsseldorf work;

swift gains in technical skill as he mastered Düsseldorf's characteristic combination of tight draftsmanship and glistening surfaces, and suggestive experimentation with free brushwork and impasto in the final works, cut short by his early death.

But the most useful element of this catalogue is its fifty-page complete checklist of Woodville's paintings and works on paper. All known variants of the engravings and lithographs are shown, and in reproductions of high quality. In short, this is the essential study of Woodville, and it is indispensable for any scholar of American art. At a surprisingly reasonable price of $25.00, there can be no excuses.

Reviewed by Michael J. Lewis

Great Houses of New York 1880-1940, Vol. II

Michael C. Kathrens. Acanthus Press, 2013.

Michael Kathrens has spent the last dozen years writing books on the gilded age mansions in America, with publications on Philadelphia's Main Line, Newport cottages, and a volume on Philadelphia architect Horace Trumbauer. He has also devoted considerable energy to a two-volume set entitled *Great Houses of New York*, of which this is the second. It is part of a series by Acanthus Press that includes surveys of residences in the Hamptons, San Francisco, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

The volume includes thirty-seven chapters on as many domiciles arranged chronologically by date of construction, and belonging to a range of wealthy New Yorkers, from self-made railroad magnate and jade collector Heber R. Bishop to Louis Gouverneur Morris, descendant of his colonial namesake. Some, like the Charles L. Tiffany house by Mead, McKim, and White, may be well-known readers, but many are not. Taken together, however, the two volumes do not work well as a unit, as each book includes buildings from roughly the same time period, with the second volume extending an extra decade to include the period from 1930 to 1940. The author acknowledges that this second book includes "equally important, if lesser known" residences that were omitted from the first. Indeed, the first volume includes some of the most well-known mansions, including the Vanderbilt residences, and that of Mrs. William B. Astor. Fortunately, a key appears inside the front cover of each book, listing owner and address, but regrettably omitting the architects.

As with the first volume, the format is large and luxurious, with historic photographs of the interior and exterior employed throughout, and interior illustrations offering clear identification of furnishings and paintings. More recent architectural photographs of fine quality occasionally aid the reader where early images are not available. Detailed floor plans for each mansion were commissioned for the publication and round out each chapter of the book. Text for each chapter is limited to a brief biography of the owner and a short description of layout and style. Biographies on each of the architects appear at the end of the book.

Compared to *Artistic Houses*, a multi-volume peek at the homes of the wealthy that was published in 1883-4, Kathrens offers more concrete information and some historical perspective. Like its illustrious predecessor, at heart it remains an elegant picture book and valuable visual resource.

Reviewed by Jeannine Falino

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Inside the Victorian Home

Socrates at Home: Philosophy and Architecture

ANNE-TAYLOR CAHILL

Socrates (470/469 BCE to 399 BCE), the Athenian teacher often credited with being the father of Western philosophy, did not confine himself to abstract thought. His approach was considerate, kind, (if often laced with humor) and applicable to everyday life. Among his discourses was one that has become known as the "Five Greek Loves." A previous article in *Philosophy Now* on the book *Socrates in Love* discussing various modern applications of the Five Greek Loves put me in mind of how these might be embodied in the form and function of the Victorian house. After all, this was meant to be a sacrosanct bastion of all things noble and loving. Indeed, as with the ancient Greeks and Romans, it was the heart of the family. The Victorian house's meaning and purpose served to cocoon the family from the harsher realities of daily life. If we look carefully we can view it as the seat of the five Greek Loves: *Xenia* (hospitality), *Philia* (friendship), *Storge* (family love), *Eros* (romantic love) and *Agape* (selfless love).

In The Reception Hall: *Xenia* (hospitality)

On being received into a proper upper-middle-class Victorian house the reception hall was the first point of contact. As a welcoming space it afforded the visitor varying degrees of *Xenia* that often involved some rather elaborate rituals. A cheerful parlor maid or a butler was usually the representative of the household who presided there. An aura of dignified friendliness was required of the parlor maid as well as a certain social savviness. As high priestess of *Xenia* she understood that not just anyone could be admitted into the home's inner sanctum. Tradespeople were not welcomed into the reception hall as they might carry dirt; if they dared to venture there they were promptly referred to the back door. Persons were often vetted for admittance through the calling card rituals of the day. Those whose cards were too ornate or too colorful were questionable. Those who did not know how many calling cards to leave, or what corners to turn down, were not admitted. Proper attention to other rituals of dress and deportment, especially those with regard to hats, canes and gloves, might also determine the level of *Xenia* the visitor would be allowed, whether it would be a warm "Do come in" – or a chilly "Madam is not at home."

In the Front Parlor: *Philia* (friendship)

If one passed social muster in the reception hall then one might pass along into the front parlor, the most formal room in the house. This space was the scene of afternoon calls. Ladies and gentlemen accorded front-parlor *Philia* had only fifteen to twenty minutes to do this. The *Philia* of an afternoon call required a brief exchange of pleasantries, news of the day, and of course gossip. After one cup of tea and perhaps a biscuit, the call ended, and it was on to the next house for yet another quarter hour of *Philia*. Given the Victorian lack of media such as we have today, the afternoon call was a good means of sharing news and gathering opinions in fifteen-minute sounds bytes. Decoration of the front parlor was indicative of the type of *Philia* expressed. No slouchy seating here; straight-backed velvet chairs predominated. Armchairs were for the gentlemen; they needed a bit of extra help balancing a teacup, hat, cane and gloves; these items were never left in the reception hall; to so would indicate a long visit rather than a "call." Chairs without arms were for ladies, as multiple layers of petticoats needed plenty of space to spread gracefully. Failure to provide these seating arrangements would put a definite dent in the *Philia* of the front parlor.

In the Back Parlor: *Storge* (family love)

Located behind the front parlor, the back parlor, often referred to as the family parlor, provided a contrast to the formality of the front parlor. This room was warm and cozy, casually laden with books, games, stereoscopes, musical instruments and all the other things that went into the fun of Victorian family life. *Storge* was promoted in various ways. In many cases each family member had a designated corner where they could pursue special interests without elaborate social proscriptions. Often the center of the room was occupied by a large puzzle table where family members worked together putting the pieces in place. Occasionally, these family parlors had padded velvet walls so as to keep the noisy hilarity of *Storge* confined to its proper place; it would never do for *Storge* to impinge on the formal *Philia* of the front parlor or other rooms of the house.

In the Dining Room; *Xenia* , *Philia* and *Storge*

Oddly the dining room was considered the most public area of the Victorian house, the location for both family dinners and formal meals. A place to welcome family (*Storge*), friends (*Philia*) and business associates (*Xenia*), it was a mélange of the Loves. Formal dinners with invited business associates or friends were complicated affairs. Woe betide the social-climbing couple who did not know the Victorian *Xenia* code! Invitations to dinner went out three weeks in advance. A later invitation was an insult as it was assumed one was an afterthought–or worse, a replacement guest for someone who had declined. Acceptances and regrets were expected within twenty-four hours – handwritten and hand-delivered of course. Guests were usually invited for seven-thirty in the evening and expected to depart by eleven. After being trussed up in corsets and gloves or stiff shirt fronts and bat-wing collars, one could dispense only so much *Xenia* or *Phila*. Three and a half hours of torture for the sake of any kind of Love was enough. Family love (*Storge*) was demonstrated in the dining room at breakfast. Here the household gathered for prayers and Bible reading before eating. Father led the ritual with all the family kneeling around the table beside their respective chairs. Servants were included but knelt in doorways. Often in less wealthy houses the dining room could also be used as a schoolroom – or even an as office for the lady of the house where she could discuss household affairs with servants.

On the Staircase Inglenook: *Eros* (romantic love)

The favorite spot for many young Victorian ladies was the staircase inglenook. Usually a window seat with a fireplace on the front staircase landing, this was an open space that required no chaperone when gentlemen callers arrived. Romantic love (*Eros*) flourished here. Fostering *Eros* in the front parlor was tricky as once the parlor door was closed on the courting couple a chaperone was required; perish the thought of what two young people in the grip of *Eros* might do behind closed doors! The genius of the inglenook was that it was open to all the comings and goings in the front hall. It was an ideal antidote to the Victorian chaperone who could easily squelch *Eros* with just a "look."

In the Nursery: *Agape* (selfless love)

For Victorian children, *Agape* (selfless love) emanated from dear old Nanny. A small kingdom placed at the top of the house, the nursery usually was comprised of two rooms, a day nursery/playroom and a night nursery/bedroom. Although Victorian children were to be "seen but not heard," they were much loved by their parents (at a distance) and by Nanny (up close). Nursery *Agape* was evidenced by obsessive concerns about health and cleanliness. No antibiotics existed in Victorian times and childhood mortality was not unusual. Having both day and night nurseries provided a healthful "change of air" for growing children. Both rooms were whitewashed annually to remove bad smells, soot from smoky fireplaces, and germs of all descriptions. Other demonstrations of *Agape* were devices such as bars on all nursery windows and very tall fireguards in front of the fireplace. Day nursery furnishings were Spartan. Tables and chairs of plain wood were scrubbed after each use; toy boxes were scoured every six months. Nursery carpets tended to be small and portable as they had to be taken outdoors and beaten clean once a week. Night nursery furnishings were equally simple: plain little white painted beds and of course a larger bed for Nanny; naturally it was understood that Nanny would be on hand dispensing *Agape* to her angels day and night. Wall decorations were of the didactic kind; needlework mottoes proclaiming various ideals of *Arête* (excellence) abounded ("Cleanliness is next to Godliness" was a favorite).

Despite all the stringent protocols of the Victorian house, it was a place of Love even if it was not necessarily Love as we moderns understand it. Each type of Love – *Xenia*, *Philia*, *Storge*, *Eros* and *Agape* – had its particular form and function. And, as dear old Nanny often liked to say to her precious darling charges, "a place for everything and everything in its place, dear."

Order, Excellence and Love – yes, Socrates would be at home in a Victorian house.

For further reading:
- Flanders,J., *Inside the Victorian Home*, W.W. Norton, 2003.
- Farjeon, E., *A Nursery in the Nineties*, Gollancz, 1935.
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- Yenne, W., ed, *Essential Handbook of Victorian Etiquette*, Bluewood, 1994.
- Unknown, *The Duties of Servants*, Copper Beech Ltd., 1894 (rpt. 1994).

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The Victorian Society in America ™

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FALL 2014 STUDY TOUR & SYMPOSIUM

CHICAGO

SEPTEMBER 26 - 28, 2014

(L to R): Formal parlor at the Driehaus Museum. Campus of George Williams College, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Glessner House library.

This "combination" event includes two days of touring wrapped around a full-day symposium.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 • MOTORCOACH TOUR

We will visit Crabtree Farm and its incomparable collection of Arts and Crafts furniture and decorative arts installed in period rooms; St. James Episcopal Cathedral (Edward Burling, 1871, rebuilt 1875) and the Driehaus Museum, located in one of Chicago's only surviving palatial mansions from the Gilded Age. The tour will be followed by a **reception at Glessner House**, completed in 1887 from designs of renowned architect H. H. Richardson for a Chicago businessman.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 • SYMPOSIUM, *Interpreting the Victorian Home*

A day-long symposium, sponsored by the Victorian Society and Glessner House Museum, will feaure Richard Guy Wilson (professor at the University of Virginia and director of the VSA Summer School in Newport) as the keynote speaker. The symposium will focus on architecturally significant houses, including Glessner House; the Lincoln home in Springfield, IL; the Pabst Mansion in Milwaukee, WI; Hull House and the Nickerson Mansion (Driehaus Museum) in Chicago; the Westcott House in Springfield, OH; and Craigdarroch Castle in Victoria, BC.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 • MOTORCOACH TOUR

Sunday's tour will take us to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, beginning with a drive through the town passing grand historic estates. The day will include visits to George Williams College (1886), Yerkes Observatory (1897) and Black Point estate (1888) on the hills high above Geneva Lake. The tour will be led by an historian and an architect.

Our headquarters hotel will be the Congress Plaza on Michigan Avenue, Chicago.
Options will include the 3-day package and the Saturday symposium only.

Registration brochures will be mailed out during the summer.
For further information, contact John Simonelli at asp4john@aol.com