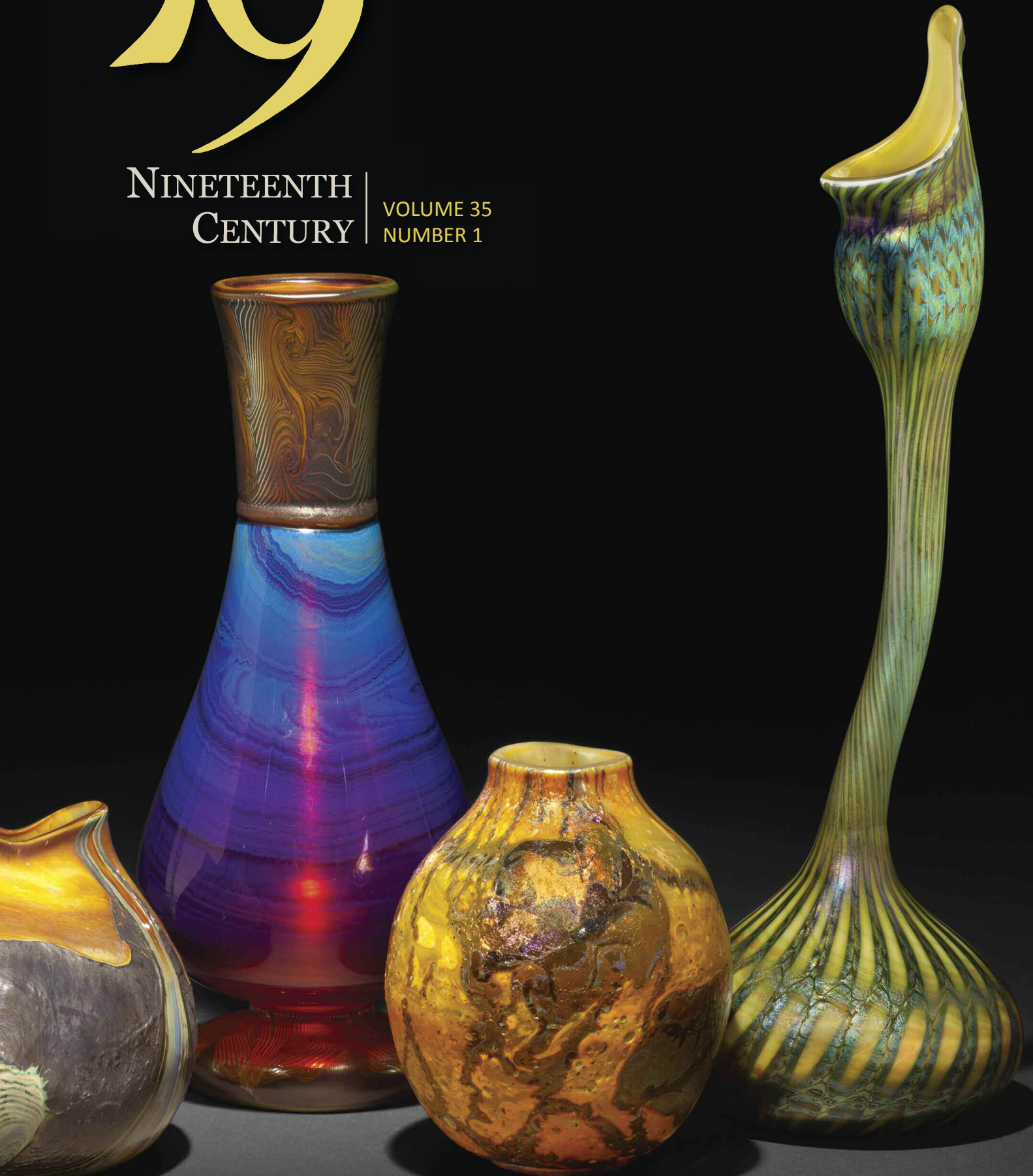


19

NINETEENTH
CENTURY

VOLUME 35
NUMBER 1



Magazine of the Victorian Society in America

19

NINETEENTH CENTURY

VOLUME 35 • NUMBER 1
Spring 2015

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Cover: Detail, grouping of Tiffany vases. See page 12 for information. Photo by David Schlegel.

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Mathilde Weil, *Rosa Rosarum*, 1899. First published in the April 1899 issue of Alfred Stieglitz's *Camera Notes*.

Philadelphia's Forgotten Plein-Air Portraitist

MATHILDE WEIL

GILLIAN GREENHILL HANNUM

Philadelphia, in the 1890s, was the leading center in America for the development of artistic photography. Home to the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, the oldest photographic club in the nation, it led the way in defining the standards for photographic exhibitions in the United States.¹ Beginning in the late 1880s, the Society moved beyond annual competitions among its photographer members to mount larger, public exhibitions, such as that held in January of 1886 at The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, which began to present photography to a wider public as an art form to be taken seriously.²

In the autumn of 1886, representatives of the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, the Society of Amateur Photographers of New York and the Boston Camera Club initiated the so-called "Joint Exhibitions" to promote both the artistic and technical development of photography. These exhibits, held annually through 1894, rotated between Philadelphia, New York and Boston and included work submitted in the following categories: landscape, portrait, genre and figure compositions, enlargements, lantern slides, applied photography (scientific or technical) and work by "ladies."³ The Joint Exhibitions quickly gained national prominence and, over the years, reflected the increasing interest in artistic photography, and the role played by Pictorialists (photographers seeking to create photographs that would be viewed as works of fine art) grew accordingly.

It was during the 1890s that New York photographer Alfred Stieglitz established himself as the leader of the pictorial movement in photography in the United States. By 1893, Stieglitz, recently returned from Europe and named editor of *American Amateur Photographer*, began looking in new directions, specifically towards the European "Salon" model as set forth by the British Linked Ring Brotherhood in its first London exhibition, held in the fall of 1893.⁴ More than any other single factor, the advent of the London Photographic Salon precipitated the downfall of the Joint Exhibitions. The Linked Ring provided a new model for photographic exhibitions, with no categories of entry and in which to sole focus was the aesthetic quality of the work. This marked a real break with

earlier camera club practices, which had been embedded in the approach of the Joint Exhibitions and led to their demise. Despite that, Philadelphia continued to play a leading role in the public presentation of photography as art. In 1898, the Philadelphia Photographic Salons were launched—a series of exhibitions that set a new standard in America for the public display of photographic work, and which were intended to challenge European dominance in the field.

It was at this time, and against the backdrop of this photographic activity, that Philadelphian Mathilde Weil took up photography. Born in January of 1872, the daughter of lawyer Edward H. Weil and his wife Isabel, Mathilde lived with her family at 1720 Pine Street in Philadelphia.⁵ Mathilde studied art, attending private classes at the Decorative Art League, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the School of Industrial Art in Philadelphia, as well as at Joseph R. De Camp's summer school in Annisquam, Massachusetts.⁶ She was a graduate of Bryn Mawr College, receiving her A.B. in 1892, and she worked initially as an editor and a literary

agent, serving as editor of *Book Reviews* and as a manuscript reader for Macmillan Company from 1893–1896 and as sub-editor of *American Historical Review* in 1895–96.⁷

Weil took up photography in late 1896 or early 1897 and had, by her own admission, only "six lessons from Pancoast and Hand in photography at the beginning and very generous help from many members of the photographic society."⁸ Almost from the start, she operated a professional portrait practice, having studios in various parts of Philadelphia for nearly twenty years.⁹

Weil specialized in home and outdoor portraiture in addition to her studio work. The brochure she had made up for her studio at 1730 Chestnut Street advertised:

A specialty is made of home portraiture, Miss Weil having found that photographs taken at the home are nearly always more attractive as well as more characteristic likenesses than those made in the unfamiliar atmosphere of the studio. The soft modulations of the ordinary window lighting are far more becoming as a rule than the hard glare of the skylight, and there is also a certain charm lent to the picture by the suggestion of personal surroundings.¹⁰



Eva Watson Schütze, *Mathilde Weil*, 1899. Library of Congress.



(L to R): Mathilde Weil, *Lady with Muff*; *The Embroidery Frame*, 1899.

In his 1899 article on “Women in Photography,” Richard Hines, Jr. quotes Weil, describing her philosophy and practice:

I got my first camera in the winter of 1896-97, as a means of amusement and interest for myself. I practiced on my friends, and my photographs became so much in demand that I did not think it right to compete with professional photographers except on their own terms. Accordingly two months from the time I started I became a professional. I charged from the beginning the highest prices that obtained in the city, and have always had more work than I could do, refusing many orders, unless the people would wait from one to two months. At present, although I charge for my appointment alone what the highest priced photographers here charge for a dozen prints, I do not find that the work pays financially, for the reason that I put too much personal work on everything to be able to take in enough orders to cover my expenses. I have one assistant, but she does none of the more important work, and I hope never to become what I call a department-store photographer, giving to others my developing, retouching, etc. I do very little retouching, though I work either on the plate or on the print whenever I can make the picture more like the people I see before me. I simply try to apply to photography the methods I learned in drawing and painting. I have been very fortunate at exhibitions, having gained an award of some kind at all to which I have sent. My chief difficulty lies in my working as a professional and not as an amateur, as I rarely can choose my own subjects or modes of working. All my awards but one have been made from my ordinary professional work, and I hope some time to give up this class of photography and work from professional models or from selected subjects whom I can pose and gown as I wish.¹¹

Among the venues in which Weil exhibited were the Philadelphia Photographic Salons, a series of exhibitions held between 1898 and 1901 at The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts under the sponsorship of the Photographic Society of Philadelphia.

The Philadelphia Photographic Salon of 1898 is considered to be the first photographic exhibition in the United States that attempted to be truly international in scope, and the first in which acceptance was based solely on the artistic quality of the work, not on categories. The recognized model was the Linked Ring’s annual photographic salon in London, and three of its key features were emulated in Philadelphia:

1. Juries were made up primarily of photographers.
2. Pictures were accepted purely on the basis of artistic merit.
3. No awards or prizes of any kind were given.

The organization of the initial Philadelphia Salon was masterminded by a joint committee, composed of representatives of the Academy and the Photographic Society.¹²

The 1898 jury consisted of the painters William Merritt Chase and Robert Vonnoh, the illustrator Alice Barber Stephens, also an amateur photographer, and the photographers Robert Redfield, a leader of the Photographic Society, and New Yorker Alfred Stieglitz, the acknowledged leader of the Pictorialists in America. The inclusion of well-known painters on the jury was intended to "...guarantee not only the fairness of the selection, but also the high degree of artistic excellence that has been striven for." Some 1,500 works were submitted, and of those, the jury selected 259 for hanging. Chase and Vonnoh evidently did not sufficiently recognize the importance of the event as both missed the judging! Redfield later wrote to Stieglitz:

This afternoon I had the pleasure of showing (the chosen works) to Mr. Chase who seemed perfectly delighted and thoroughly in sympathy with our plans. He entirely approves of our selection and will not hesitate to sign the certificate with the rest of the Jury.¹⁷

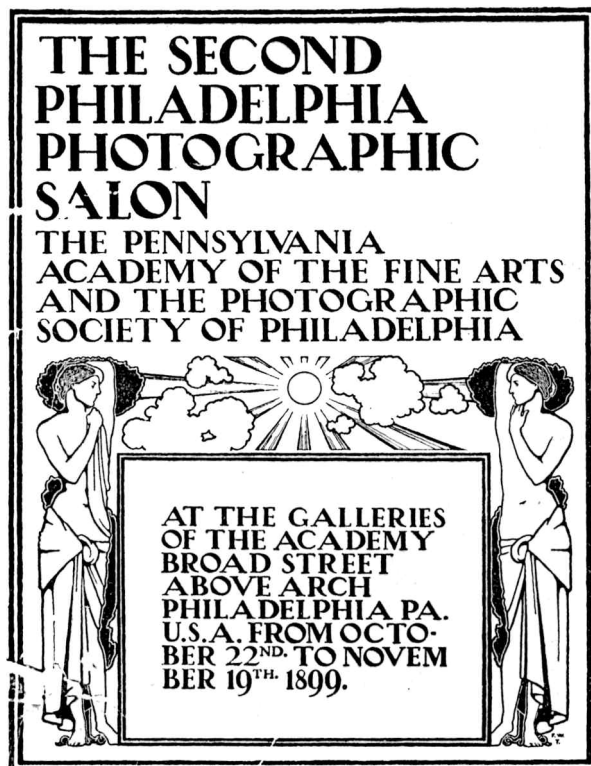
Mrs. Stephens did attend the jurying, but it may be assumed that the final selection was essentially a Redfield/Stieglitz collaboration, with Stieglitz's being the dominant voice, as it generally was. Mathilde Weil exhibited the maximum number of ten photographs, along with New York Pictorialist Gertrude Käsebier, Ohioan Clarence White and Stieglitz himself.¹⁸ Among Weil's selected works was *Rosa Rosarum*, which Stieglitz later reproduced in *Camera Notes*.¹⁹

The Salon was both a popular and a critical success. Initially unsure of the public's response, and not wishing to take an undue financial risk, The Pennsylvania Academy solicited a "guarantee fund" from the Photographic Society to

cover the cost of the event if admission fees did not.²⁰ They need not have worried. Over 13,000 people attended the exhibit, necessitating its extension by a week, from November 12 to November 20.²¹ The press was also enthusiastic in its response. The portraits of White, Käsebier and Weil were generally praised, *Wilson's Photographic Magazine* noting:

Among the pictures hung at the Salon it was not at all difficult to pick out a dozen portraits made by amateurs, equal to anything produced by the best men in the profession of to-day or past years. Those who are curious as to this detail should grasp the first opportunity of seeing the portraiture of Clarence H. White, of Newark, Ohio; of Mrs. Gertrude Kasébier (sic), a New York amateur; or of Miss Mathilde Weil, of Philadelphia. The work of these three amateurs, as shown at the Salon, was a revelation of originality, refined taste, and skilful (sic) treatment.²²

The critic had one thing wrong, by 1898 both Weil and Käsebier had established portrait studios and were professional, not amateur photographers, and both were already widely recognized Pictorialists. In his review of the Salon, critic Charles Caffin mentioned Weil's previous success exhibiting in Europe, noting, "American exhibitors have made a conspicuous mark at the salons in London and Paris. For example, in the persons of Miss Mathilde Weil, of Philadelphia, and Mr. William A. Fraser they took two out of the six medals awarded this year by the Royal Society."²³ Such success is noteworthy for a newcomer to the medium. Clearly, her artistic training stood her in good stead, a background she felt was essential for a successful artistic photographer. The following summer, Osborne Yellott also



(L to R): Catalogue of The Second Philadelphia Photographic Salon, 1899. Mathilde Weil, *Song of the Meadow Lark*, 1899.



Mathilde Weil, *Springtime*, 1900.

lavishly praised Weil's artistry in an article titled "Mathilde Weil—Artist Photographer," in which he called her a "born artist."²⁵

In 1899, Weil was again represented in the Philadelphia Salon, though with only five works: *Caryl*, *Portrait: Miss M*, *Lady with Muff*, *The Embroidery Frame* and *Song of the Meadow-Lark*. That year, the Salon's five-member jury, notably comprised solely of photographers, included Käsebier and Washington, D.C. photographer Frances Benjamin Johnston, who exhibited ten and seven works respectively.²⁶ Johnston would go on to promote Weil's work internationally by exhibiting it in Paris the following year and featuring it in her series on American women photographers in *The Ladies' Home Journal*.²⁷

In 1900, only a single work by Weil was included in the Philadelphia Photographic Salon, a portrait of an elderly lady with her chair drawn up to the fireplace entitled *Mrs. G*; it was reproduced in the exhibition's catalog. One wonders whether Weil's submission to the Salon that year was limited as a result of her having loaned prints to Johnston that summer for an exhibit in Paris of the work of American women photographers.²⁸ Also at this time, four of Weil's figure studies were in F. Holland Day's possession, about to be displayed in his "New School of American Photography" exhibition at the Royal Photographic Society in London. Originally intended for display by the Linked Ring, of which both Stieglitz and Day were members, behind-the-scenes maneuvering by Stieglitz, who wanted to be recognized in Europe as the sole leader of the American Pictorialists, led the Linked Ring to turn down the show, which Day then offered to the rival Royal Photographic Society.²⁹

By the turn of the century, the photographic community in America was experiencing a number of deep fissures as members of photographic clubs and organizations, like the Philadelphia Photographic Society and the Camera Club of New York, began to divide into increasingly hostile "camps," with traditionalists, who were interested primarily in the scientific and technical aspects of the medium, on one side, and Pictorialists, who represented the "New School" and focused on aesthetics, on the other. Within the Pictorial movement, there were also factions developing, and Stieglitz's response to Day's London exhibition caused a rift between the two men that, over the next several years, led many to take sides. All of this took a toll on the Philadelphia Photographic Salons as the various sides struggled for control of the Photographic Society. Traditionalists gained the edge in seats on the jury for the 1901 exhibit, leading to a boycott by many of the "progressives."³⁰ As later recorded by Photographic Society member Walter Zimmerman in an essay in *American Photography*:

The four salons were great successes artistically and as educators in photographic art. The first three were practically managed and judged by the leaders of what is now the Society of the Photo-Secession. The Fourth Salon was under different management, those who are now of the Secession holding aloof and submitting no work.

Civil war raged fiercely during these four years in the camps of the pictorial photographers, culminating in 1901. In that year there was hardly any neutral ground between the so-called "impressionists" and the more or less "straight" photographers. And yet the first three salons contained much that was sharp and natural, while the fourth contained a fair share of the "softened" work. The contest was more personal than a matter of art and method.³¹

Mathilde Weil ultimately chose not to submit work to the controversial Fourth (and final) Salon in 1901. She wrote in a letter to Frances Benjamin Johnston:

It is at a great sacrifice of my personal inclinations that I have decided not to send anything to the Salon this year but as matters stand at present I cannot see my way conscientiously to doing it. For several reasons I should like especially to be represented there this year and I am very sorry that matters have turned out as they have. It makes it hard for you too as a Juror, doesn't it?³²

Weil exhibited a single work in the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901, and was represented at the inaugural Photo-Secession exhibit at the National Arts Club in 1902 and in two subsequent Photo-Secession exhibits, both in 1904, one at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and the other at Washington's Corcoran Gallery of Art. In addition, Stieglitz reproduced her work on several occasions in *Camera Notes*.³³

It is clear that Weil particularly admired Johnston and, as a fellow female professional photographer, sought out her advice. For example, she asked her colleague about the best way to submit work to foreign exhibitions:

Do you send it unframed, and, even then, do you receive entrance blanks in time? I am so unsatisfied with Mr. (Welford?), who has had my work for the past six months, that I should like to take it away from him, but it is of so much advantage to me to exhibit abroad that I thought possibly there might be some agency through which I could receive the entrance blanks in time to send the prints myself. I suppose that you are so well known that you receive all the prospectuses long in advance of the exhibitions, but how did you manage at the start? I am looking forward to the promised exhibition of your work at the Photographic Society. Your success is always such a pleasure to me, for I invariably think of you as the pioneer in photography for women.³⁴

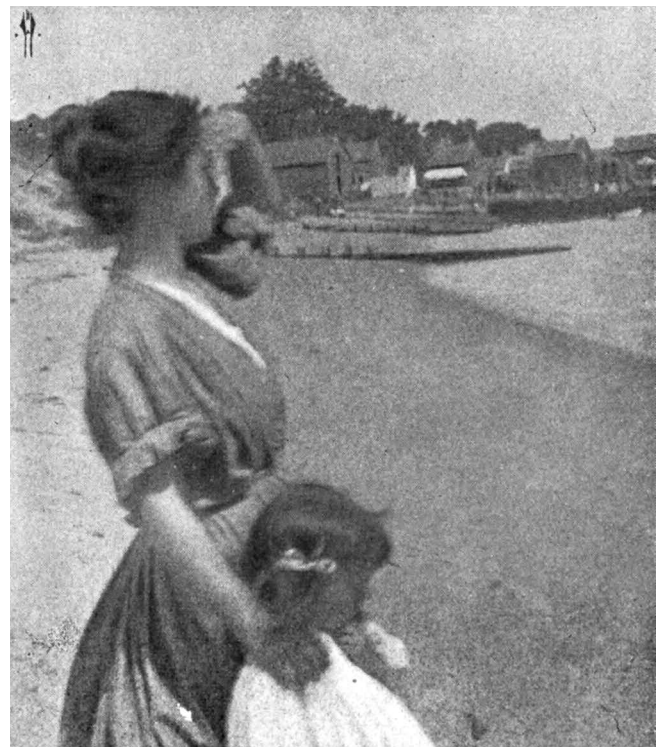
Weil's pictorial style is characterized by a certain naturalness which lends it a particular charm. Although she occasionally ventured into stylized, Symbolist-inspired themes, such as *The Crystal Globe*, the bulk of her work is like the examples she selected to illustrate her 1904 article on "Home Portraiture" in *The Photo-Miniature*.³⁵ She had written to Johnston in 1900:

I am specially fond of the pictures of children and am specially interested in home photography as I consider it the only way, as a rule, to get a simple and natural likeness. I believe in professional work that the individuality and character of the models are to be considered first of all, and if necessary, I think the artistic quality of the work should be sacrificed in the attempt to obtain an unartificial likeness.³⁶

Developing this idea in her 1904 essay on the subject, Weil writes:

Moreover, in portraiture it is unfortunately the case that an artistic picture and a good likeness are by no means always synonymous. Very beautiful effects may be produced that are either totally uncharacteristic of the subject of the picture or that present him in so unflattering a light that the case is even worse.³⁷

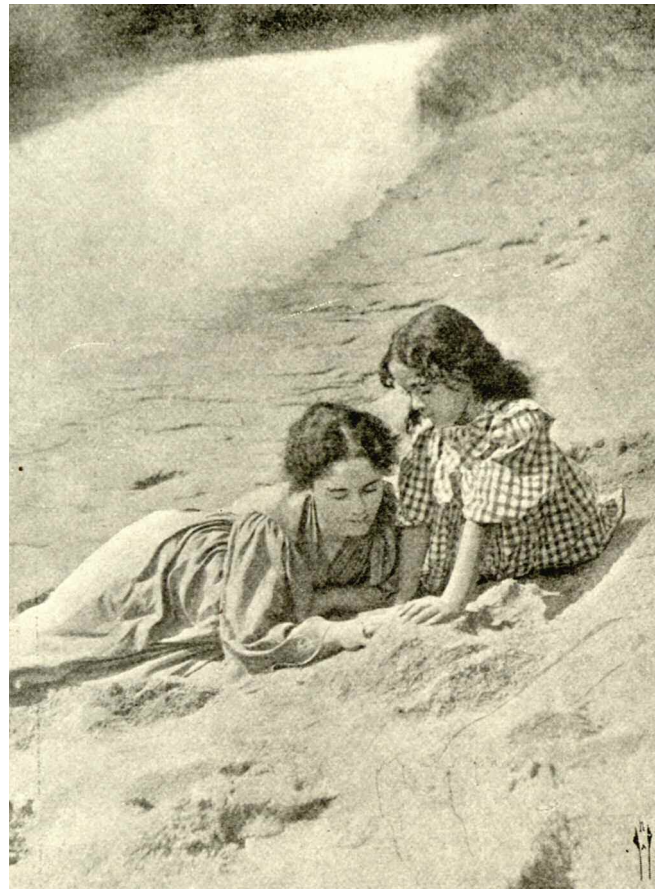
She goes on to describe the possibilities open to amateur portraitists to photograph people in their own homes, thereby avoiding the monotony of plain studio backgrounds. She also made it a point to get to know her subjects



(Top to bottom): Mathilde Weil, *Il Penseroso*, 1900. *The Return of the Fleet*, was exhibited in the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901.



Mathilde Weil, *The Crab*, 1900. *Castles in the Sand*, 1901.



personally and to bring out what was most characteristic in each.

In another 1904 article, Weil recommends outdoor portraiture.³⁸ She appropriates the mantle of leadership for herself in this area, noting that few professionals have explored its possibilities and few amateurs have approached it seriously:

Portraiture in the open air by means of photography is a line of work that seems, up to the present time, to have been strangely neglected; its very possibilities in fact, having rarely been tested. Some few pictorial workers, it is true, have made figures the principal features in their outdoor compositions, and often with very beautiful results; but even this was mainly for the sake of the decorative qualities possessed by such figures and the additional interest lent to the landscape by their inclusion. Little or no attempt has been made at portraiture when the chief object was the attainment of a characteristic likeness, all other aims being subordinated to that end. Even among those professionals who have photographed people out-of-doors, few have undertaken this work as part of their regular business, treating it rather as a diversion and making use of their friends or professional models rather than of their clients as the subjects of their pictures.³⁹

Weil obtained some wonderful results herself with plein-air portraiture, particularly capturing the innocence and wonder of children at play. She points out:

...it is in the pictures of children, above all, that outdoor

work is particularly successful. The freedom and lack of artificiality in the open-air surroundings create an atmosphere far better suited to a childish subject than the stuffy furniture of the modern house and, unless a picture can be obtained of the child at play in his own nursery, there is nothing half so attractive for him as an outdoor background. Moreover, the quick exposures possible out-of-doors allow the photographer to take the picture with the minimum of restraint for his little models, who may be allowed to play about with comparative freedom even while the pictures are being taken.⁴⁰

She clearly saw a distinct advantage in the shorter exposure times required of outdoor photography, especially when her subjects were active children who frequently found the tedium of studio portraiture unbearable.

Perhaps as a result of her early fine arts training, Weil saw herself as quite different from the run-of-the-mill professionals of her day, most of whom she held in low regard:

The professional usually follows in the path trodden down for him by his predecessors and, rightly or wrongly, he believes that the public is content merely with that which it has always had. Even among the more advanced professional photographers the majority are slow to adopt new methods, most of them even still clinging to the now antiquated custom of maintaining a studio where their clients come to pose before a camera rather than of going directly to the homes and thus

obtaining almost invariably a far more characteristic likeness as well as a more attractive picture.⁴¹

Weil's equipment and techniques, as set forth in her two 1904 articles, were quite simple and straight forward. The illustrated images were made with a 6 ½ x 8 ½" view camera fitted with an ordinary rapid rectilinear lens (maker unknown) with a focal length of about twelve inches. The lens, which was purchased second hand at low cost, remained Weil's favorite; "Later on a special portrait lens of well-known make and costing over eight times as much was bought under the impression that it was desirable, but after a prolonged trial it was discarded in favor of the first lens, even for indoor work."⁴² At this time, Weil was also taking advantage of cut film mounted in aluminum film sheaths, which she found light in weight and reliable when placed into the plate holders. Her essays reveal a photographer with a thorough understanding of darkroom technique, in short, a consummate professional. In fact, her knowledge and professionalism were so highly regarded that she served as a Lecturer on Photography at the Drexel Institute in Philadelphia from 1905 to 1909.⁴³ In that capacity, she inspired the formation of a new organization of women photographers:

In 1905, Margaret Bodine and her classmates in Mathilde Weil's photography class at the Drexel Institute, recognizing their shared interest in the art of photography, decided to form a club. Throughout the history of the Lantern and Lens Guild (sic), the club would count many upper-class Philadelphia women as its members including Louisa Rau, wife of Philadelphia photographer William H. Rau.⁴⁴

In her last known photographic essay, "Outdoor Portrait Photography," published in 1906 in *Country Life in America*, Weil recommends the accepted Pictorialist practice of throwing the background slightly out of focus in order to bring "out the portrait without destroying the atmosphere."⁴⁵ Again, she notes that outdoor photography produces a more natural portrait:

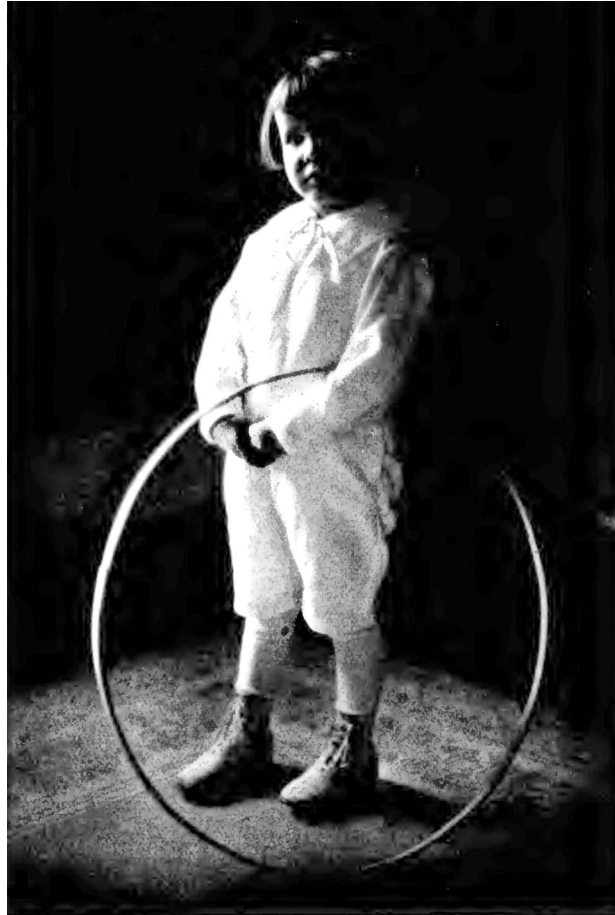
Outdoor portraiture has the same attractions of simplicity and lack of artificiality that is noticeable in home pictures, and it has this advantage also—its exposures may be so much shorter, that it is easier to gain a natural and unconstrained likeness. The backgrounds are less hackneyed and more interesting,

and the lighting is more diffused and consequently less harsh in contrasts.⁴⁶

Relatively little is known of Weil's later years. The Pictorial movement began to lose steam as Stieglitz increasingly turned his attention to promoting modern art, and World War I brought an end to many publications and exhibitions. Weil seems to have given up her Chestnut Street studio around 1917, and to have worked as a photographer only from 1896-1915. According to photo historian Christian A. Peterson, Weil's "last known show was the Portrait and Figure Exhibition of 1911 in Hamburg, documented by her image in the December 1911 issue of *American Photography*.

The last known reproduction of her work appeared in the *American Annual of Photography* 1916, a child portrait."⁴⁷

Perhaps she ultimately decided that the photographic profession was not lucrative enough to support her, a problem she'd indicated already in 1899.⁴⁸ By 1920, when a Bryn Mawr alumnae publication listing her details came out, she had returned to the world of publishing and was in New York City, with her address listed as 37 East 60th Street. There, she operated "The Writers' Workshop, Inc.," a literary agency specializing in fiction and poetry.⁴⁹ She relocated to the San Francisco Bay Area of California in 1938, where she worked as a literary agent until 1941, when she returned to Philadelphia, dying there in June of 1942.⁵⁰ Today, she is virtually unknown, but in 1899, Osborne I. Yellott identified her as "the leading photographer of Philadelphia," a city that at the time was setting the standard for artistic photography, and at the beginning of the twentieth century, her reputation was such that Frances Benjamin Johnston included her among "The Foremost Women Photographers in America."⁵¹ Her contributions to the medium through her work and her writings were numerous, and her role as an early professional portraitist advocating a plein-air approach makes her a significant pioneer of the medium.



Mathilde Weil, *Boy With Hoop*, 1916., the last known reproduction of her work. It was published in the *American Annual of Photography*, 1916.



Notes

- The Photographic Society was organized on October 19, 1862 when a small group of Philadelphians met in the Assembly Buildings at Tenth and Chestnut Streets to establish a club devoted to the practice of Photography. See Walter Zimmerman, "The Oldest American Photographic Club," *American Photography*, Vol. 2, no. 9 (September 1908), 486-492.
- An exhibit of lantern slides by Society members had been shown at the Academy in April 1883. See William I. Homer, *Pictorial Photography in Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Academy's Salons* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1984).
- Terms of Agreement and Rules, Third Annual Joint Exhibition, April 8 – 20, 1889*, Philadelphia, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives.
- For a history of the Linked Ring Brotherhood, see Margaret Harker, *The Linked Ring* (London: Heinemann, 1979).
- United States Census of 1900. Mathilde's father, Edward, was a leader in Philadelphia's Jewish community and played a leading role in the establishment of that city's United Hebrew Charities. See Henry Samuel Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia: Their History from the Earliest Settlements to the Present Time; a Record of Events and Institutions, and of Leading Members of the Jewish Community in Every Sphere of Activity* (Philadelphia: Levytype Company, 1894), 112, 307-308. Thank you to Gary Saretzky for this reference.
- Mathilde Weil, letter to Frances Benjamin Johnston, June 8, 1900, Library of Congress: Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection (hereafter, LC: FBJ Collection), reel 20, frames 740-743. The Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art was chartered in 1876 and was predecessor to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and what is today the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. According to a card in the Bryn Mawr archives, Weil was registered in the Antique Class at The Pennsylvania Academy in 1893, served on its Board of Fellowship (its alumni organization) in 1901-02 and as its Secretary in 1915-16 (Special Collections, Canaday Library, Bryn Mawr College).
- "Weil, Mathilde," *Bryn Mawr College Calendar: Register of Alumnae and Former Students*, Vol. XIII, Part I (January 1920), 170.
- Weil to Johnston, June 8, 1900. This was probably Photographic Society member Charles Rodman Pancoast and S. Ashton Hand; thank you to Christian A. Peterson for pointing me to "Plans for Darkrooms," *American Amateur Photographer*, Vol. 7, no. 11 (November 1895), 519-520, which references their business and notes their specialty in platinum printing, at which Weil came to excel.
- Her first studio, according to the 1898 city directory, was 604 Baker Building. In 1899, the studio address is listed as 1520 Chestnut. In 1900, she moved to 1628 Chestnut. Sometime between 1905 and 1908, she moved her studio again, this time to 1716 Chestnut. Her father may have died at this time, as Mathilde's residence, along with that of her brother Arthur, shifts to 212 West Washington Square, and Edward Weil disappears from the directory. In 1909, Mathilde relocated her studio again, this time to 1730 Chestnut. She continues to be listed at this address with the Washington Square residence until 1917, when only her home address is included. Mathilde disappears from the Philadelphia city directories permanently in 1919-20. See *Gopsill's Philadelphia City Directories* (Philadelphia: James Gopsill's Sons, 1898-1905) and *Boyd's City and Business Directories* (Philadelphia: C.E. Howe Company, 1908-25).
- Mathilde Weil, advertising brochure, LC: FBJ Collection, reel 34, frames 91-92. Weil was not the only photographer practicing home portraiture; for an overview of the field see Christian A. Peterson, "Home Portraiture," *History of Photography*, Vol. 35, no. 4 (November 2011), 374-387.
- Richard Hines, Jr., "Women in Photography," *Wilson's Photographic Magazine*, Vol. 36 (March 1899), 140.
- Those involved at The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts were its President, Edward H. Coates, and its Secretary, Harrison S. Morris; George Vaux, Jr., John G. Bullock and Robert S. Redfield represented the Society.
- Illustrator Howard Pyle had been the original choice but had to decline and was replaced with Stephens.
- Charles H. Caffin, "Philadelphia Photographic Salon," *Harper's Weekly*, Vol. XLII, no. 2185 (November 5, 1898), 1087.
- Caffin, 1087.
- Christian A. Peterson, "A History of Exhibitions of Photography in America: 1887-1917," unpublished M.F.A. thesis (Syracuse University, 1982), 36.
- Robert S. Redfield, letter to Alfred Stieglitz, October 20, 1898, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
- Käsebier and White later became Fellows in Alfred Stieglitz's seminal organization, The Photo-Secession, founded in 1902.
- This image appears in *The Photographic Times*, Vol. 31, no. 1 (January 1899), 32 and in *Camera Notes*, Vol. 2, no. 4 (April 1899), 151.
- Mary Panzer, *Philadelphia Naturalistic Photography, 1865-1906* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 1982), 14.
- William I. Homer, *Alfred Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1983), 46.
- Anonymous, "The Philadelphia Photographic Salon," *Wilson's Photographic Magazine*, Vol. 35, no. 504 (December 1898), 530. It should be noted that, by her own admission, Weil was already a professional at this point; Käsebier had turned commercial in 1896, opening her first New York studio in late 1897 or early 1898. See Barbara Michaels, *Gertrude Käsebier* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1992), 28. One wonders whether the reviewer simply *assumed* women were amateurs.
- Caffin, 1087.
- See, for example, her comments on the need for artistic training in Mathilde Weil, "Outdoor Portraiture," *The Photo-Miniature*, Vol. 5, no. 58 (January 1904), 442.
- Osborne I. Yellott, "Mathilde Weil—Artist Photographer," *Photo Era*, Vol. 3, no. 1 (June 1899), 326.
- The jury also included Clarence White, Boston Pictorialist Fred Holland Day and Philadelphian Henry Troth. *The Second Philadelphia Photographic Salon* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, October 22–November 19, 1899). For more information on Johnston, see Gillian Greenhill Hannum, "Frances Benjamin Johnston: Promoting Women Photographers in *The Ladies' Home Journal*," *Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 24, no. 2 (Fall 2004), 22-29.
- For more on Johnston's Paris exhibition see Bronwyn Griffith et. al., *Ambassadors of Progress: American Women Photographers in Paris, 1900 - 1901* (Giverny, France: Musée

- d'Art Americain in association with the Library of Congress, 2001). Johnston left her collection of photographs by Weil and other women photographers whose work she had promoted to the Library of Congress. Bryn Mawr College also has a modest collection of Weil's work, mainly focusing on members of the Bryn Mawr faculty and community. Beyond that, her work is widely dispersed, and it is doubtful that her plates and records have survived.
28. Johnston herself did not exhibit, but other members of her "collection" were better represented in the exhibition: the Allen sisters with two prints, Käsebier and Eva Lawrence Watson (later Eva Watson-Schütze)—both jurors, along with Stieglitz, White and Frank Eugene—with ten each, and Elizabeth Brownell with one. See *The Third Philadelphia Photographic Salon* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, October 21–November 18, 1900). For an overview of Johnston's activities in Paris, see Hannum, "Frances Benjamin Johnston," 22–29.
 29. Alvin Langdon Coburn, "American Photographs in London," *Photo Era*, Vol. 6, no. 1 (January 1901), 214. Coburn mentions *Rosa Rosarum*, *By the Window* and *Constance* by name (the last appearing in the January 1900 issue of *Camera Notes* under the title *Beatrice*; see Christian A. Peterson, *Alfred Stieglitz's Camera Notes* (New York and London: The Minneapolis Institute of Arts in association with W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1993), 152.) For more about Day's exhibition and Stieglitz's conniving, see Gillian Greenhill Hannum, "Bombshell at Russell Square: F. Holland Day and the Royal Photographic Society," *The Photographic Journal*, Vol. 129, no. 12 (December 1989), 568–570.
 30. For a contemporary discussion of these divisions, see Osborne I. Yellott, "Third Philadelphia Photographic Salon," *Photo Era*, Vol. 5, no. 6 (December 1900), 170; for more on the role of F. Holland Day, see Pam Roberts, *F. Holland Day* (Amsterdam: Van Gogh Museum, 1900). The "Jury of Selection" in 1901 was comprised of Charles I. Berg of New York, Frances Benjamin Johnston of Washington, D.C., and Allen Drew Cook, George W. Hewitt and Herbert M. Howe, all of Philadelphia. See *The Fourth Philadelphia Photographic Salon* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the Photographic Society of Philadelphia, November 18–December 14, 1901). While several photographers later associated with the Photo-Secession exhibited, the "Stieglitz camp" led the boycott; Day participated and was represented by seven works.
 31. Zimmerman, 490.
 32. Mathilde Weil, undated letter to Frances Benjamin Johnston, LC: FBJ Collection, reel 19, frames 364–365.
 33. *Beatrice* (also known as *Constance*) appeared as a photogravure in Vol. 3, no. 3 (January 1900), 109; two other images appeared as halftones in Vol. 2, no. 4 (April 1899), 137 and 151. A letter of December 27, 1902 in the Bryn Mawr College archives records her election as an Associate member of the Photo-Secession (Special Collections, Canaday Library).
 34. Mathilde Weil, letter to Frances Benjamin Johnston, February 12 [no year], LC: FBJ Collection, reel 19, frames 358–362.
 35. Mathilde Weil, "Home Portraiture Book #1: Written from the Pictorial Viewpoint," *The Photo-Miniature*, Vol. 6, no. 65 (August 1904), 244–280.
 36. Weil to Frances Benjamin Johnston, June 8, 1900.
 37. Weil, "Home Portraiture," 251.
 38. Mathilde Weil, "Outdoor Portraiture," 441–464.
 39. Weil, "Outdoor Portraiture," 441.
 40. Weil, "Outdoor Portraiture," 444.
 41. Weil, "Outdoor Portraiture," 443.
 42. Weil, "Outdoor Portraiture," 447.
 43. "Weil, Mathilde," *Bryn Mawr College Calendar: Register of Alumnae and Former Students*, Vol. XIII, Part I (January 1920), 170.
 44. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Collection 3085, Lantern and Lens Guild [sic] of Women Photographers Records, 1904–2004, 1. According to the collection's Abstract, "The Lantern and Lens Guild was established as the Drexel Camera Club in 1905 during Mathilde Weil's photography class at the Drexel Institute of Art, Science and Industry (now Drexel University). Led by Margaret Bodine, the ladies met on a weekly basis at 24 South 17th Street and, later, 24 South 18th Street, for lectures, classes and exhibitions. They changed their name to The Photographers for a year before officially naming the group the Lantern and Lens Guild of Women Photographers in 1912."
 45. Mathilde Weil, "Outdoor Portrait Photography," *Country Life in America*, Vol. 10 (May 1906), 47.
 46. Weil, "Outdoor Portrait Photography," 47.
 47. Christian Peterson, "Mathilde Weil—biography," *Luminous Lint—Photography: History, Evolution and Analysis*. Web. See also Peterson, *Alfred Stieglitz's Camera Notes*, 177.
 48. Hines, 140.
 49. *Boyd's Philadelphia City Directory*, 1917 and "Weil, Mathilde," *Bryn Mawr College Calendar* (January 1920), 170. Special Collections of the Canaday Library, Bryn Mawr College, has a flier for "The Writers' Workshop," with an address listed as 135 East 58th Street. It begins, "You are a writer. Don't you ever need help in marketing your work?"
 50. Mathilde Weil advertisement, *Oakland Tribune*. May 21, 1939 (Bryn Mawr College, Canaday Library, Special Collections: clipping). Her passing is recorded in "Class Notes," *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Bulletin*, Vol. XXII, no. 8 (November 1942), 17.
 51. Yellott, "Mathilde Weil—Artist Photographer," 323 and Frances Benjamin Johnston, "The Foremost Women Photographers in America—Miss Mathilde Weil," *The Ladies' Home Journal*, Vol. 18, no. 7 (June 1901), 9. Illustrated in Hannum, "Frances Benjamin Johnston," 25.



Early Favrite "Lava" vase, c. 1898.

COVER: (L to R): A carved Tiffany Favrite cameo flower form vase, c. 1903. Early Tiffany Favrite vase, c. 1895; Private collection. Tiffany Favrite "Byzantine" vase. Tiffany Favrite "Cypriote" vase, c. 1896. Tiffany Favrite "Gooseneck" vase, c. 1898. Photos by David Schlegel.

Art Meets Science

THE BLOWN GLASS OF LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY

PAUL DOROS

The United States in the late nineteenth century was a nation with a certain degree of insecurity when it came to its place in the world of art. Although its artists had made significant strides in both the fine and decorative arts, their work was rarely acknowledged by foreign critics to be the equal of that coming out of Europe. The American public was desperately searching for an art field in which to claim clear superiority, and it was Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933) and his leaded-glass windows that came to the forefront. Even Tiffany, however, readily admitted that much of his fame was based not upon his stained glass windows but on his blown glass vases.¹ He was responsible for innumerable decorative innovations, but it was the objects of blown glass that Tiffany probably loved the best and took the greatest pride in creating.

Tiffany became this country's greatest glass artist by a rather indirect route. Upon graduating from high school, he made a dramatic choice that contradicted his father's wishes.² Instead of joining the family business or attending college, he declared his intention of becoming a professional artist. He moved to New York City in 1866 and started studying painting full-time under the guidance of the landscapist George Inness.³ Perhaps of even greater significance than his studies with Inness were Tiffany's trips to North Africa.⁴ These trips had a profound influence on Tiffany's aesthetic philosophy, as well as his later artistic endeavors, and directly impacted the subject matter of many of his early paintings, which were largely of "Oriental" scenes.⁵

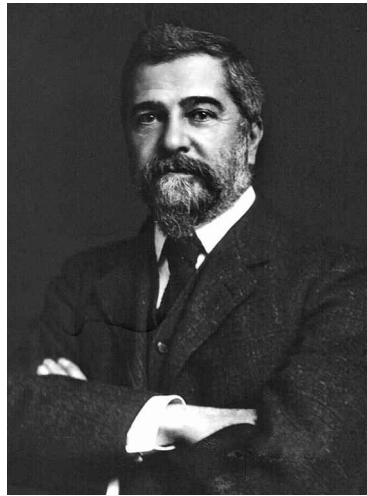
These initial works, primarily watercolors, were generally met with acclaim, and Tiffany was often mentioned as having the potential to become a leader in the field: "Of the younger artists, Louis Tiffany attracts and deserves as much attention as any."⁶ His oeuvre expanded somewhat over time to include picturesque genre scenes and a few grittier urban landscapes. Although he still garnered praise, criticism of his paintings steadily grew, as detractors became increasingly opposed to the extensive use of gouache in his watercolors and his continued dependence on Oriental themes. It was at this point in the late 1870s that Tiffany decided to make a radical career change. His ultimate goal was to achieve fame, not for monetary reasons, as he was

already relatively wealthy, but to accomplish his true mission. As Tiffany wrote later in life: "It is all a matter of education, and we shall never have good art in our homes until people are able to distinguish the beautiful from the ugly."⁷ He firmly believed the aesthetics of most Americans were severely limited and undeveloped and that he was the person best qualified to be this country's leading tastemaker. So, in order to expand his reach and influence, in 1879 Tiffany became the first American artist of note to become an interior designer.⁸

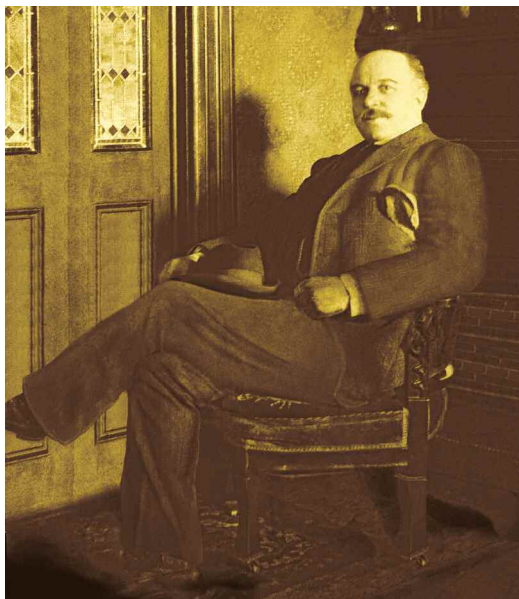
He entered into loose business arrangements with designer Candace Wheeler and the artists Lockwood de Forest and Samuel Colman in what was collectively known in the press as the firm of Louis C. Tiffany and Associated Artists.⁹ The firm quickly became one of the country's leading interior decorating outfits, and its reputation was further enhanced when President Chester A. Arthur selected it to redecorate the White House in 1882. Tiffany, however, was still dissatisfied with the relatively few people who could admire his work and with the comparative lack of influence he was having on the tastes of the American public. So, in 1885, he amicably left his partners to start a new business, the Tiffany Glass Company, in order to more fully pursue the burgeoning field of leaded glass windows.

Tiffany had included such windows in a number of his interior designs, and their artistic and commercial success was one reason for his decision. Of greater importance was the realization that the incredible number of churches being constructed at the time presented both a tremendous business opportunity and an ever-increasing audience to inspire. Louis and his company achieved national and

international fame with the exhibition of its work at Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Tiffany changed the firm's name the previous year to the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company to reflect its expansion into other decorative areas and he used this World's Fair to reveal the total scope of its production.¹⁰ The company's pavilion, featuring a complete chapel, was one of the most widely attended in the entire exposition.¹¹ It also allowed Americans to proudly and widely proclaim that their country was supreme in one area of art: "The United States undoubtedly stands at the head of nations



Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933)



(L to R): Arthur J. Nash at his Flushing, N.Y. home, c. 1901. Courtesy The Arthur J. Nash Archive, the Rakow Research Library, The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, N.Y. George "Dutch" Gipper at work inside Tiffany Furnaces.

in the production of colored stained glass decorations. This is largely owing to the effort and enthusiasm of Mr. Louis C. Tiffany."¹²

Despite this overwhelming success, Tiffany was facing two major predicaments that threatened his entire leaded-glass window operation. He was buying a considerable amount of sheet glass from the Kokomo (Indiana) Opalescent Glass Company. Kokomo, in 1890, decided for financial reasons to stop producing both the drapery glass and the gold ruby glass that he used so extensively.¹³ Tiffany was also becoming increasingly frustrated by the amount of breakage and the limited color range of the material he was buying from Kokomo. An even greater problem arose in March 1892 with the expiration of his very favorable exclusive eleven-year contract with Louis Heidt, a Brooklyn producer of opalescent flat glass. Furthermore, Tiffany wanted to expand his business to include blown glass objects in order to reach a broader market. Tiffany realized his windows were "indeed unwieldy objects to exhibit. Not so the small glass objects for the drawing room, the dining table, the boudoir."¹⁴ All of these factors led Tiffany to make a crucial decision: he would build his own glasshouse.

Once he reached this conclusion, Tiffany's next step was to find someone to serve as the glassworks' superintendent. He might have considered himself, as he had a significant knowledge of glassmaking. He had begun experimenting with glass as early as 1875 at Francis Thill's glasshouse in Brooklyn.¹⁵ It was reported he went to France in 1880 with the expressed mission of "examining the latest novelties in glass decoration."¹⁶ Tiffany even had a small glassmaking facility on the top floor of the building that housed his interior decorating firm, although his partners might have discouraged him from conducting further experiments after he nearly burned down the structure in January 1884.¹⁷

Tiffany understood, however, that he required someone who had the extensive technical and chemical expertise he lacked and was extremely fortunate to be introduced, through a mutual friend, to Arthur John Nash (1849-1934).

Nash, a highly skilled glassmaker trained in Stourbridge, England, came to the United States in the summer of 1892 with the intent of purchasing and managing a glasshouse. But he soon realized he had insufficient capital and needed a wealthy backer. He and Tiffany quickly decided to become partners and founded the Stourbridge Glass Company, which was essentially a subsidiary of the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company. In April 1893, the two men purchased Slow's Laundry in the quiet community of Corona, Queens, and soon converted and enlarged it into a glassworks to produce sheet glass.¹⁸

The equal partnership between Tiffany and Nash was abruptly altered on the early morning of October 28, 1893, when their factory was destroyed by fire. An insurance policy was being negotiated at the time, but nothing had been signed and \$20,000 was required to rebuild the plant.¹⁹ It was impossible for Nash to make any financial contribution, as he had spent his entire life savings in becoming Tiffany's partner.²⁰ This meant a new business arrangement had to be established. Tiffany, along with a few of his wealthy friends, would supply the necessary financing. Nash was required to concede to Tiffany full artistic control over everything the glasshouse would ever produce, but he maintained his position of superintendent. This was absolutely vital, as Nash's experience and knowledge of glassmaking allowed Tiffany to fulfill his desire for the company to produce blown glass objects in addition to the flat glass.

Over the years, Tiffany has acquired a reputation of being quick-tempered and dictatorial, but this characterization is largely inaccurate. But he did demand punctuality and complete loyalty from his friends, family and employees. If Tiffany was considered aloof and cold, it was partly because, due to his extreme lisp, he was hesitant to talk to anyone but his closest acquaintances.²¹ He contributed to a number of charities throughout his life, his favorite being the Infirmary for Women and Children in New York. He loved to travel, was a respectable tennis player if not as gifted a golfer, owned a very slow fifteen-foot racing sloop with the surprisingly

unimaginative name of “Water Baby,” was a car fanatic who enjoyed being driven at such high speeds that his chauffeurs received numerous tickets and caused several accidents, had a little dog named “Funny,” and, not surprisingly for a man who enjoyed hosting lavish affairs, was publicly opposed to Prohibition.²²

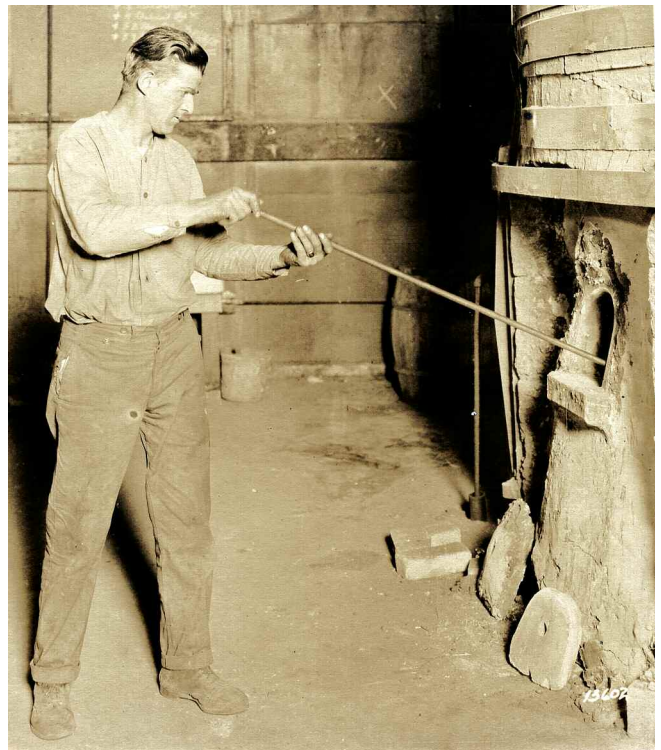
Tiffany truly loved glassmaking, and every available Monday was happily spent at his flourishing glasshouse. He would come in with new ideas for decorations and shapes and it was Arthur Nash’s responsibility to translate these concepts to the craftsmen. Tiffany had little contact with these men, although there is a story told of his walking through the building one Monday to see what was being made. A new employee was having an especially difficult time creating a large vase, using both hands to control and manipulate the blowpipe. Seeing Louis Tiffany leisurely walking by in a finely tailored suit, the glassblower, not knowing who he was, said, “Here, Bub, hold this, you ain’t doing nothing,” and handed him his soggy, partially chewed cigar to better concentrate on the task at hand.²³ One can only assume the glassmaker, after learning of the stranger’s identity, never repeated that *faux pas*.

The individuals who made the blown glass objects were among the finest glassmakers in the world. They were divided into teams, known as “shops,” and generally consisted of four men: a gaffer, who led the team; a servitor, who was the gaffer’s primary assistant; a gatherer, who was responsible for getting the mass of molten glass on the blowpipe for the gaffer; and a decorator. A boy, generally a young teenager, did the menial chores, and another glassblower was added to the shop if a particularly intricate piece was being created. In the glasshouse’s entire forty-year history (its name was changed to Tiffany Furnaces in 1902), a total of only nine gaffers were employed.²⁴

Interestingly, the men were not paid significantly better than any other glassworker on the East Coast despite their superior skills. In 1904, the gaffers received \$30 a week, the decorators, gatherers and servitors \$18 and the boys made \$9.²⁵ The work was not constant, as the factory was closed four to five weeks every summer, when it was simply too hot to work in the glasshouse, and the men were not paid during that time.²⁶ And if the gaffer missed work due to illness, the rest of the team was laid off until he returned to work.²⁷

Be that as it may, long careers at Tiffany Furnaces were the rule, rather than the exception, for a couple of reasons. First, there was a tremendous esprit de corps among the men that created an almost family-like atmosphere. They had their own baseball, bowling and basketball teams that played in the local leagues; smokers, card games, dances and picnics were regularly held; and a special fund was even established to compensate employees who were forced to miss work due to illness or injury. Even more important than this camaraderie was the freedom they were granted as glassmakers. They took exceptional pride in producing world-renowned objects unlike any that had been made in the preceding 4,000-year history of the industry. They were given total freedom to experiment with any technique or decorative innovation they could conceive. Tiffany Furnaces was a place where aesthetic concerns superseded profit making, and the glassmaker was truly considered an artist as well as a craftsman.

The company first displayed objects of blown glass as a minor component of an exhibition held at its Manhattan showrooms in February 1894 and these items received minimal recognition. By this time, all of the glass made by the Stourbridge Glass Company was known as “Favrile,” whether it was used in windows, mosaics or vases. Louis Tiffany, in one of his rare interviews, described the meaning of the word: “‘Favrile’ is a new word, secured by registration, ...derived from the same root as the Latin words ‘faber,’ ‘fabrico’ and ‘fabrilis,’ and is in meaning akin to them, hence it can be used in describing any object of wood, stone or glass made by hand.”²⁸



(Top to bottom): Early Favrile tumbler, c. 1894. Photo by David Schlegel. Gatherer at work in Tiffany Furnaces.

Two months later, after a display at the Brooklyn Institute, art critics recognized the potential of this new type of blown glass: “Mr. Tiffany is on track of something very fine in colored glass, the natural result of his beautiful work in stained-glass windows. It is a lucky period when an artist of tried and approved powers sets himself to the task of improving glassware for interior decoration and the use of the table.”²⁹ There was a nascent art glass industry in the United States, led by the Mt. Washington Glass Company (New Bedford, Massachusetts), the New England Glass Company (Cambridge, Massachusetts), and some firms in West Virginia.³⁰ However, the majority of this glassware was of repetitive design and shape. Louis Tiffany had a completely different objective: to make every vase a unique work of art that would be judged on the same criteria as a painting or a sculpture.

The very nature of blowing and decorating glass by hand meant that no two pieces could ever be exactly alike. Tiffany and Nash further ensured the individuality of each object by encouraging the gaffers to continually experiment with new fabrication and decorative techniques. Production errors, or “accidents,” were an unfortunate consequence in many instances, but what would have been considered fatal flaws by other manufacturers were overlooked, as long as the desired artistic effect was achieved.³¹ The financial consequences of a “shop” taking more than a week to successfully create a motif Tiffany requested were rarely, if ever, taken into consideration.³²

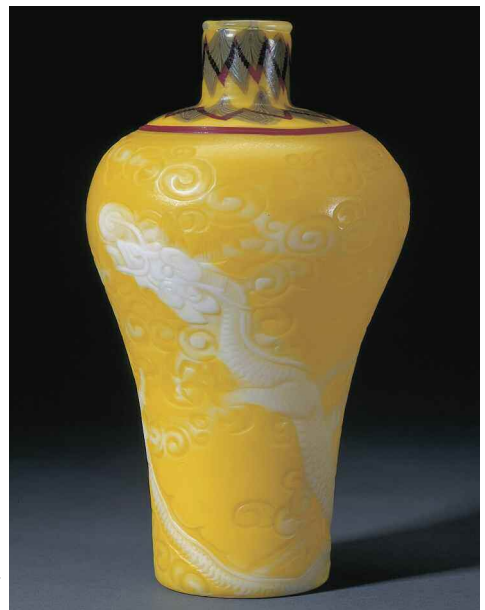
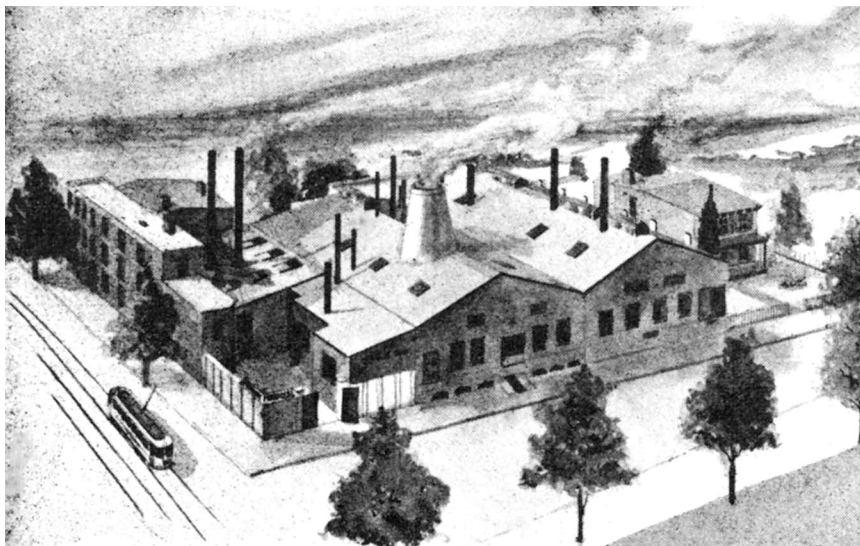
The other method of ensuring each piece’s individuality was Arthur Nash’s constant experimentation with the glass formulas. The primary components of Favrite were similar to the glass produced by most American manufacturers: silica, in the form of pure Berkshire sand; potash, also known as saltpeter or potassium nitrate, which served as flux and made the glass more malleable and easier to shape; calcium carbonate, a stabilizer; cullet, usually collected from the hardened glass at the bottom of the melting pots, which also acted as a stabilizer; and lead, which made the glass more durable and suitable for engraving and cutting. However, the percentage of lead in Favrite varied widely from object to

object, with some containing as much as 35% while others had none. An interesting component of most Favrite pieces was boron, an expensive chemical typically only used at the time by lens makers. Boron acted as a flux and a color enhancer while also adding durability. The fact that some Tiffany Furnaces objects contain as much as 17% boron is another indication of the company’s willingness to place artistic considerations above financial ones.³³

The earliest Favrite vases generally display crude forms, a limited color palette and rudimentary glassmaking skills. Nash and the gaffers, however, quickly acquired the expertise to begin producing amazing objects of astonishing diversity. Many of the pieces exhibit a matte finish, created by exposing the glass to fumes of hydrofluoric acid after it had cooled and hardened. The gaffers also began using glass comprised of multiple colors swirled together, a technique already being used in the production of the company’s flat glass. Although largely overlooked or underappreciated today, the blown glass pieces made between late 1893 and 1895 are among the most imaginative ever created by the glasshouse.

Cut, engraved and cameo glass were also an important part of the company’s early output. One of the first appraisals of the firm’s blown glasswork stated: “The range of colors is very great, passing from liquid crystal, in some cases engraved in diamond facets or in low relief, to the darkest of bottle glass. Some of the combinations of colors, some of the shades and hues of one color, are successful; others look like attempts that were better thrown away.”³⁴ In addition to depicting the wide degree of experimentation with color effects at the glasshouse, and noting that some results were more successful than others, this review also reveals Tiffany’s attempt to appeal to buyers of brilliant cut glass, which was perhaps the most commercially viable American-made glass of the period.

The glasshouse’s engraved and carved cameo glass designs quickly became more inventive and achieved national recognition with Tiffany’s hiring of Fredolin Kreischmann (1843-1898) in 1894. Kreischmann, a native of Austria, was trained in Birmingham, England, and acknowledged as one of Europe’s finest engravers. He was decorated by King



(L to R): Tiffany Studios facility in Corona, Queens c. 1908. A carved Favrite cameo vase, c. 1914. Stanley and Dolores Sirott collection. Photo by David Schlegel

Ludwig of Bavaria and Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria, as well as admitted into the French Legion of Honor. Louis Tiffany was evidently impressed by his exhibit at the 1893 Columbian Exposition and proceeded to hire him, at “a high salary,” to work for the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company.³⁵

Kreischmann’s work was both a critical and commercial success. His engraved and cameo pieces were considered masterpieces, some of them selling for the then incredible sum of \$1500 and finding their way into the collections of the Vanderbilts, Goulds and Havemeyers. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Royal Museum (Berlin) and the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) also obtained examples of his work.

Fredolin Kreischmann’s death on August 6, 1898, at the age of 45, could have had a devastating effect on the glasshouse. Even six months later, his loss was described as “a vacancy which is found almost impossible to fill.”³⁶ However, superbly skilled engravers were eventually discovered to replace him and the company continued to manufacture exemplary engraved and carved cameo pieces for the remainder of its existence.

The fact that the glasshouse made works in cameo is no surprise, considering Nash’s training in Stourbridge, England, where some of the world’s finest cameo glassware was being produced, and Tiffany’s knowledge of what the renowned glass artist Emile Gallé (1846-1904) was doing in France. Tiffany’s cameo glass, however, differed radically from the typical European production in two important aspects. While the European glassworks generally cased, or covered, the entire body of the piece with a single or multiple layers of different colored glass and then removed the background with acid to create the cameo effect, Tiffany’s glassworkers usually padded, or applied, small pieces of differently colored glass onto the body. And instead of acid they used engraving and cutting tools to form and refine the design. Both of these techniques added considerably to the cost of production, but it gave Tiffany the appearance he desired.

Favrile glass vases in the forms of flowers appeared in 1894 and were the first distinctive shape made by the glassworks. The inspiration was undoubtedly Louis Tiffany’s

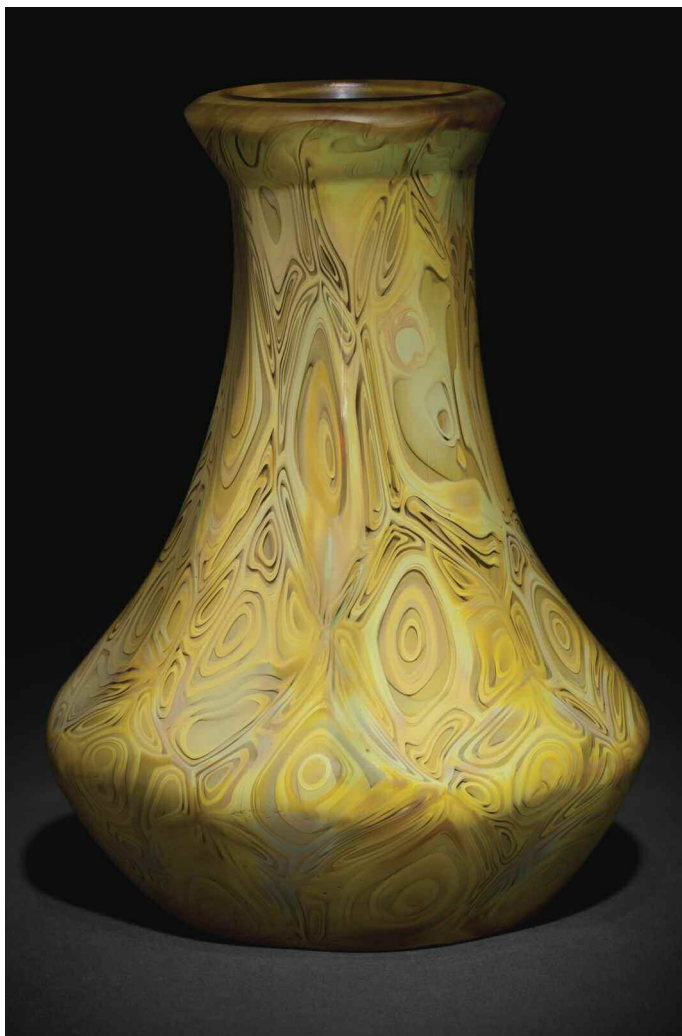
love of nature and extensive knowledge of botany. That, combined with Arthur Nash’s awareness of flower-shaped vases being made in England and Italy, served as sufficient catalysts for Thomas Manderson (?-1914), Tiffany’s gaffer credited with developing and refining the motif.

Flower form vases were also among the earliest pieces to exhibit the artificial iridescence that won Favrite such an incredible amount of worldwide fame. Dr. Parker Cairns McIlhiney (1870-1923), credited with the innovation, was born in Jersey City, New Jersey, and received his doctorate from Columbia College in 1893, specializing in the chemical analysis of metals. For reasons that remain unknown, Tiffany

hired the twenty-four year old McIlhiney a year later to be the glasshouse’s chief chemist. He did not invent applied iridescence on glass, as British and Austrian firms were already using it.³⁷ But, in 1895, McIlhiney perfected the chemical mixtures and method of application that made its use commercially practical and artistically successful. The fact that Tiffany fired his first four chief chemists, prior to hiring McIlhiney, is a clear indication of how desperately he wanted to create this decorative effect. Tiffany Furnaces was certainly not the first glasshouse to attempt to create objects that emulate striations within stones. That distinction went to Friedrich Egermann (1777-1864), a Bohemian glassmaker, who invented Lithyalin glass in the 1830s. Many other European companies soon copied Egermann’s invention, as did Tiffany, and “Agate” vases were among his firm’s earliest production. The use of a swirled, opaque glass was a medium with which Tiffany’s glassworkers were already familiar. However, making

an agate vase was extremely difficult, as it required phenomenal skill to replicate the identical design in multiple vertical sections.

Favrile “Agate” vases, with their panel-cut surfaces, perhaps come closer than any other glass objects ever made to replicating the actual appearance of sliced sections of striated and banded agate. Many of these pieces have ground and polished top rims, a feature not normally found in blown Favrite pieces. Their creative and commercial popularity is indicated by the fact that Tiffany Furnaces continued to produce “Agate” vases until the mid-1920s.



Tiffany Favrite “Agate” vase, c. 1909. Photo by David Schlegel.



(L to R): Tiffany Favrile “Lava” vase, c. 1907. Tiffany Favrile “Peacock” vase, c. 1898. Stanley and Dolores Sirott collection. Photos by David Schlegel.

Tiffany’s fondness for nature, and plants in particular, was best expressed in the glasshouse’s paperweight-technique vases. Tiffany Furnaces never made paperweights in the traditional sense, where a design was enclosed in a dome of transparent glass. However, around 1900, it developed a technique to encase a decoration between two layers of clear glass. The design was frequently enhanced by the use of glass millefiori—from the Italian mille (thousand) and fiori (flowers)—and a gold, or orange-gold, iridescence applied to the vase’s interior surface.³⁹ The glasshouse’s initial attempts to produce paperweight vases featured basic shapes, simple designs and an occasional production flaw. Louis Tiffany, however, quickly realized that this technique would be the perfect vehicle to express his love of nature, especially flowers. The gaffers’ skills and inventiveness improved rapidly, and paperweight vases are among some of the glassworks’ most artful creations. Pieces featuring viburnum, poppies, gladioli, lilies of the valley, dogwood blossoms, narcissi or morning-glories, some priced as high as \$1,000, were highly extolled, and purchased, by the public.

Although Tiffany’s intention was to influence the nation as a whole, Favrile glass pieces were expensive and never intended to reach the general public. The company’s mass-produced bronze desk sets were more affordable, but even those could only be afforded by the upper class. In addition, the merchandise was difficult to obtain, as the number of

authorized retailers handling Tiffany Studios objects in the United States was quite limited.⁴⁰ Tiffany’s target was the wealthiest Americans. He believed he could best impact the aesthetics of the majority if they learned that the aristocracy deemed Tiffany Studios objects worthy of being in their mansions.

Louis Tiffany had a genuine affection for ancient glass, and this influenced a great amount of his glasshouse’s production. In 1876, the fledgling Metropolitan Museum of Art purchased, for \$60,000 in gold, approximately 22,000 objects discovered in Cyprus by “General” Luigi Palma di Cesnola (1832-1904).⁴¹ Ancient glass comprised a large part of the collection, much of it with pitted and iridized surfaces caused by the natural decay of the pieces having been buried for centuries. This glass fascinated the public and inspired glassmakers for more than fifteen years after being placed on view in the museum: “If the effects secured by long ages of treatment in Nature’s laboratory could be produced artificially on modern glass, at a reasonable cost, it would seem to be an object well worth striving for.”⁴² Tiffany, together with McIlhiney and Nash, took up the challenge, which led to their perfecting applied iridescences and a type of pock-marked glass known today as “Cypriote.”

The “Cypriote” texture was created by using potassium nitrate, a chemical Tiffany Furnaces also used as a flux in making Favrile glass. This chemical was combined with some

crushed glass, arranged on an iron table called a marver, and the hot glass on the blowpipe was rolled over this mixture. The heat of the glass would cause the chemical to break down and release small pockets of gas just below the surface of the vase. Those in turn would expand, burst and form the cratered surface. The piece could then be further enhanced and decorated with tooled glass drippings and threadings and given an overall iridescence.

So-called “Lava” vases also have highly irregular surfaces but additionally feature uneven iridescent gold drippings in high relief that bring to mind lava flowing from an erupting volcano. An interesting aspect of these vases is that it took the glasshouse a number of years to perfect the motif. While the gaffers needed only one or two years to master flower forms and paperweight and “Cypriote” techniques, “Lavas” slowly evolved over a twelve-year period. Even when the technique and design were firmly established, these objects were produced in very limited quantities and only during two brief periods, around 1906-1907 and again about 1916. The rarity of “Lava” vases was largely due to the technical difficulties involved in their production. The multiple layers of glass and the irregular thick gold trailings created enormous internal stresses and many examples did not survive the crucial annealing, or cooling, process. It is also likely the “lava” motif proved to be too *outré* for most of the company’s clientele.

The peacock was one of Louis Tiffany’s favorite decorative motifs, and he incorporated it into the full range of his work, from leaded-glass windows to jewelry. He was obviously intrigued by the vivid iridescent blue, purple and green sheen of the bird’s feathers.⁴³ Peacock-decorated Favrile vases were first displayed at the company’s Fourth Avenue showrooms in the early spring of 1897, and the timing was entirely due to marketing considerations. Several New York City newspapers, probably given the information by Tiffany himself, reminded the public that the peacock was symbolic of Christ’s resurrection, and these vases would make an ideal gift for Easter. Many peacock vases feature aventurine, a shimmering and sparkling type of glass created by adding copper filings to the mixture. Tiffany’s gaffers utilized this seventeenth century Italian invention with ultimate skill: “...the peacock glass...is ‘made of six different varieties, namely two of aventurine, two of transparent, and two of opaque.’ This is the latest variety published to the world, and in some respects the finest, seeming to gather up in a synthesis all the true Favrile beauties, color, iridescence, luster, metallic reflexes that seem more at home on precious pottery than on glass; ornamentation at once consistent, lovely, and full of mystery; beauty of one kind in reflected light, of another kind, not less valuable, in transmitted.”⁴⁴ The peacock design met with immediate, and sustained success and the motif was used throughout the remainder of the glasshouse’s history.

Aquamarine vases, the glasshouse’s last major innovation, were a natural offshoot of the paperweight-technique pieces.⁴⁵ Tiffany wanted a type of vase that would re-create the experience of viewing aquatic life in tropical waters from a glass-bottomed boat. Arthur Saunders, one of his gaffers, was sent to Bermuda in 1913 to get a better idea of exactly what was meant. Upon his return, Tiffany and Nash developed aquamarine glass. These vases feature solid bodies of green-tinted glass encasing underwater scenes



Tiffany Favrile “Aquamarine” vase, c. 1914. Exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1914, this vase is perhaps the tallest example of “Aquamarine” glass ever produced. Stanley and Dolores Sirott collection. Photo by David Schlegel.

ranging from gently swaying water lilies to goldfish playfully swimming through seaweed and even floating jellyfish. Some pieces were enhanced with finely engraved dragonflies on the exterior surface. Aquamarine vases are exceptionally rare, as it took an incredibly strong man to manipulate these

objects, some of which weigh as much as twenty-five pounds, from the end of a five-foot long blowpipe. Production was probably severely limited because Saunders was simply too exhausted to make more than a couple of examples each day. Additionally, many vases failed to survive the annealing process because of the density of the material and the incompatibility of the different types of glass used in forming the internal decoration.

It is difficult to overestimate the fame achieved by blown Favrile glass from its invention to the 1920s. Tiffany's company was awarded gold medals at the 1900 Paris Exposition, the 1901 expositions in Buffalo and Dresden, the St. Louis Exposition in 1904, the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition (San Francisco), and the Sesquicentennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1926. It also won the grand prix at the 1902 Turin Exposition and the grand prize at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (Seattle) in 1909. Museums around the world, including the Smithsonian, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Musée du Luxembourg in Paris and the Imperial Museum of Fine Arts, Tokyo, obtained examples for their collections, a fact frequently mentioned in Tiffany's advertising. Several important painting collectors advocated Favrile vases as being the equal of any "fine" art. Henry Osborne Havemeyer (1847-1907), who along with his wife Louisine formed what many consider the finest private



Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company's exhibition at the 1900 Paris Exposition. The punch bowl in the display case is currently in the collection of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond.

collection of Impressionist paintings ever assembled in this country, was one of Favrile's earliest patrons and donated a significant number of his vases to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1896.

The same patriotic fervor that helped propel the popularity of the company's leaded-glass windows also played an important role in creating a demand for blown Favrile glass objects: "There is little doubt that America now leads in the art of glass manufacture. The results obtained by Louis C. Tiffany in his experiments may be said to mark an epoch...In the forms of lustrous and iridescent glass, Mr. Tiffany has also produced some exquisite examples. The lost arts of the Phoenicians seem to have been discovered."⁴⁶ Even Europeans praised Tiffany's work, although some did so grudgingly. A correspondent for the *Brooklyn Eagle*, reporting on the 1897 Scandinavian Exposition in Stockholm, wrote:

It is pleasant to find in talking with the men in charge of these exhibitions how enthusiastic they are about the glass of Louis C. Tiffany. "No one else in the world can make anything equal to it," they declared with decision, and I have often heard the same thing in Paris, only confessed with more reluctance, as it is hard for the French to yield their prestige in such matters to an American.⁴⁷

Louis Tiffany retired from Tiffany Studios in 1919. Dismayed by the course of contemporary art, he established the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation in an attempt to influence young artists by reminding them that "true" art was based on nature, not "curiosities of technique."⁴⁸ The company, lacking Tiffany's inspired leadership and financial support, filed for bankruptcy on April 16, 1932.⁴⁹ Tiffany died the following year after a ten-day bout with pneumonia. He had championed, for almost sixty years, his firm belief that "the 'decorative' arts are more important to a nation than the 'fine' arts. Hence the value to a community of artists who devote their talent to making things of use beautiful. They are educators of the people in the truest sense, ...masters of art appealing to the emotions and the senses and rousing enthusiasm for beauty in one's environment."⁵⁰ Although Tiffany spent his entire life in a "quest of beauty," his creations were largely ignored, and even forgotten, at the time of his death and for many years afterwards. It is now acknowledged, however, that Louis Comfort Tiffany's mission was brilliantly accomplished, and his genius revealed, through his lamps, windows, pottery, mosaics, jewelry and, perhaps most vividly, his blown glass vases.



Notes

1. Charles DeKay, *The Art Work of Louis Comfort Tiffany* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1914), p. 25.
2. His father was Charles Lewis Tiffany (1812-1902), one of the co-founders, and later the principal owner, of Tiffany & Company, the world-famous jewelry and silver retailer.
3. Tiffany had previously taken painting lessons from Inness, who had lived in an artist's community located on the

grounds of the Eagleswood Military Academy, while Tiffany was attending the school. See George Inness, Jr., *Life, Art and Letters of George Inness*, vol. 3 (New York: The Century Club, 1917), pp. 68-69.

4. He first traveled to the region in the summer of 1870 with the artist Robert Swain Gifford and returned the following winter with Gifford and fellow artist Samuel Colman.
5. In the late nineteenth century, the term "Oriental" referred to North Africa and the Middle East.

6. "The Fine Arts-The Fifth Annual Exhibition of the Water Color Society," *New York Daily Tribune*, January 26, 1872, p. 5.
7. Louis C. Tiffany, "The Gospel of Good Taste," *Country Life in America*, vol. 19, no. 2 (November 1910), p. 105.
8. "Fine Arts-In the Studios," *Brooklyn Eagle*, November 30, 1879, p. 3.
9. The four were well acquainted with each other through teaching classes at the Society of Decorative Arts in New York City.
10. The company, in addition to the leaded-glass windows, was offering mosaics, lighting fixtures, metalwork, fabric, furniture, both in wood and marble, and church vestments
11. The chapel reportedly hosted an estimated 1.8 million visitors in just three months. "Resting Place for the Tiffany Glass Chapel," *Crockery and Glass Journal*, October 21, 1897, p. 42.
12. "American Stained Glass," *Newark (Ohio) Daily Advocate*, July 11, 1893, p. 3.
13. Crist, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
14. Charles DeKay, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
16. "Home Notes and News," *New York Herald*, January 6, 1880, p. 4.
17. "The Fire Record," *New York Daily Tribune*, January 6, 1884, p. 2.
18. "Local Happenings," *The Newtown Register*, April 13, 1893, p. 5.
19. "Disastrous Fire at Corona," *The Newtown Register*, November 2, 1893, p. 5.
20. Leslie Nash, one of Arthur Nash's sons, recalled his father saying to his mother while watching the fire: "Fannie, there goes my last dollar." See Leslie Nash's typed manuscript in the Research Collection of Albert Christian Revi, The Rakow Research Library, Corning Museum of Glass.
21. Martin Eidelberg, et al., *A New Light on Tiffany* (New York: New York Historical Society, 2007), p. 23. I would like to thank Lindsay Parrott, Director/Curator of the Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass, for bringing this to my attention.
22. "Vanderbilt's Yacht Wins More Honors," *New York Times*, June 28, 1908, p. 53; "Wet League Spent \$46,000 in Two Months," *New York Times*, May 14, 1926, p. 15.
23. See Leslie Nash's typed manuscript in the Research Collection of Albert Christian Revi, The Rakow Research Library, Corning Museum of Glass.
24. None of the so-called "Tiffany Girls" were ever permitted to work in the glasshouse, as the job was considered too physically demanding for a woman.
25. Deposition given by Edwin Millward, United States District Court, Western District of New York, Tiffany Furnaces, Plaintiff, vs. Steuben Glass Works, Defendant, November 26, 1913; "Lockout at Tiffany Studios," *The Newtown Register*, September 15, 1904, p. 5.
26. "Local Happenings," *The Newtown Register*, August 31, 1905, p. 5.
27. "Local Happenings," *The Newtown Register*, June 24, 1915, p. 5.
28. "New York City," *New York Daily Tribune*, January 2, 1897, p. 2. The company originally named the glass "Fabrile." They obtained a trademark for "Fabrile" in November 1894.
29. "New Pastes and Shapes in Decorative Glass," *The Critic*, vol. 21, no. 639 (May 19, 1894), p. 348.
30. See the foreword written by Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, the Anthony W. and Lulu C. Wang Curator of American Decorative Arts, Metropolitan Museum of Art in Paul Doros' *The Art Glass of Louis Comfort Tiffany* (Vendome Press, 2014) for additional information on the origins of the American art glass industry.
31. Some of the more common flaws were broken air bubbles on the surface, inclusions within the glass and lopsided forms. Even cracked pieces were sold to museums and major private collectors.
32. "In the case of some of these pieces blown from a combination of many kinds of glass, as many as ten men are employed in making one piece. Mr. Tiffany is so bold in his experiments along this line that he frequently loses a whole day's work, not getting one piece out of thirty." "Glass in Rainbow Hues," *The (New York) Sun*, January 16, 1898, p. 5.
33. W.D. Kingery and P.B. Vandiver, "The Technology of Tiffany Art Glass," an unpublished study conducted at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1983, pp. 11-23.
34. "Pots and Flasks of Many Hues," *New York Times*, May 20, 1894, p. 17.
35. "Death List of the Day—Fredolin Kreischmann," *New York Times*, August 14, 1898, p. 9.
36. "Art in Glass," *The (Brooklyn) Daily Standard Union*, February 8, 1899, p. 3.
37. The Viennese glasshouse Lobmeyer introduced artificially iridized glass in 1873 and, in 1878, Thomas Webb and Sons, Stourbridge, England, developed their iridescent "Bronze" glass.
38. Jimmy Stewart, Tiffany Furnaces gaffer, as quoted in Robert Koch, *Louis C. Tiffany's Glass-Bronzes-Lamps* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1971), p. 64.
39. Millefiori are thin, circular sections sliced from a thick bar of glass comprised of numerous multi-colored thin rods that are fused together.
40. In 1907, there were only nineteen authorized retailers outside of New York City. See "Brock and Feagans are in Their New Quarters," *Los Angeles Herald*, November 5, 1907, p. 12.
41. "Antiquities of Cyprus," *New York Times*, November 20, 1876, p. 5.
42. George M. Hopkins, "Iridescent Glass," *Scientific American*, vol. 64, May 23, 1891, p.329.
43. The peacock was also particularly well suited to his church decorations. It was a symbol of immortality to the ancient Romans, as they believed its flesh did not decay after death. The early Christians readily adapted this symbolism. To them, the peacock's shedding of its feathers each year and growing newer, more resplendent plumage represented the resurrection of Christ.
44. Cecilia Waern, "The Industrial Arts of America: II. The Tiffany or 'Fabrile' Glass," *International Studio*, vol. 5 (1898), p. 19.
45. The two types are similar in that a design is enclosed within glass, but while paperweight vases employ two relatively thin layers of blown transparent glass, the decorations in aquamarines are encased in solid ovoid sections of green, and in rare instances brown, tinted glass.
46. "Art Notes and Notices," *The (New York) World*, October 20, 1895, p. 6.
47. "Art at the Stockholm Fair," *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 25, 1897, p. 18.
48. Louis C. Tiffany, "Art-The Quest of Beauty," *Lotus Magazine*, vol. 7, no. 6 (March 1916), p. 286.
49. "Business Records," *New York Times*, April 17, 1932, p. N14.
50. Charles deKay, *op. cit.*, p. 28.



Red House, from the southeast. Photo by author.

William Morris Changes Abodes

RED HOUSE AND KELMSCOTT MANOR

JOHN WATERS

Two houses lived in by William Morris prompt an inquiry into restoration, interpretation, and the meaning of “authenticity.”

Fifteen miles east of London, in now suburban Bexleyheath, stands Red House, a solid, two-story, red brick structure designed by architect Philip Webb in 1859 for leading English designer and tastemaker William Morris and his wife-to-be, Jane Burden. The Morris family lived in Red House for only five years from 1860 to 1865, but over the last century and a half its association with Morris has made it a site of pilgrimage for those interested in his work.

One hundred miles west of Red House, at the western edge of Oxfordshire, in the village of Kelmscott, stands Kelmscott Manor. This substantial house, built in stages around 1600 and 1670, sat largely unnoticed for almost three centuries, until a lease was taken on it by William Morris and artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti in 1871. For the next quarter century the house served as a retreat for Morris and his family. Even before his death in 1896, Kelmscott Manor had joined Red House as another pilgrimage site for those interested in Morris, his work, and the Art and Crafts Movement.

In the summer of 2013 I visited Red House with the Victorian Society in America’s London Summer School. The following summer I toured Kelmscott Manor with the Attingham Summer School. Thanks to my own pilgrimages, so relatively close in time, I was able to compare these two very different houses. The stories of Red House and Kelmscott Manor have often been told separately, but they have not been considered together. As an architect specializing in preservation, their direct juxtaposition allowed me the opportunity to examine not only the houses’ design similarities and differences, but also to investigate issues regarding their preservation and how they are now interpreted to the public. Using these houses for such an inquiry is particularly appropriate because Morris, a moving force in the founding of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), had strong views about building preservation.¹

Red House—a Youthful Idyll

William Morris was only twenty-four years old in August 1858 when he first began discussing the idea of a new house with his close friend Philip Webb, with whom he had worked in the office of Gothic Revival architect George Edmund Street.² Although Morris had left Street’s office, and the architectural profession, with the idea of becoming a painter, Webb was at the beginning of what would prove to be an

important architectural career. Thus, when Morris became engaged to eighteen-year-old Jane Burden in the spring of 1858, he turned to Webb to design his house.³

Morris wanted a house that would serve as a meeting place for his artistic friends. In addition to Webb, these friends included Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones, and Charles Faulkner, all of whom Morris met during his university days in Oxford, or shortly thereafter. It is tempting to see the place as a post-college fun-house, occupied by men who didn’t want to leave their youth behind, but that view would be superficial. Morris envisioned a true artistic brotherhood, with that vision drawn from the Arthurian legends that provided source material for so much of the artwork the group created. In 1857 several of the group had worked on covering the walls of the Oxford Union debating chamber with murals that depicted tales of the Round Table. Later the walls of Red House would be decorated with similar images.

To reach Red House in 1860, one went by train from London to Abbey Wood and traveled by horse cart for the remaining three miles. Although the acre of land on which the house was built was surrounded by orchards, the vicinity immediately to the east of the house was unromantically known as “Hog’s Hole,” a name that particularly amused Rossetti. The house itself and its young, wealthy, bohemian inhabitants would have stood out from its surroundings both physically and socially.

That Red House was built for a young couple cannot be overstated, especially because it may not appear to modern eyes to be a house designed for newlyweds. The building has sat for many years behind a high brick wall, with the main entry facing north. Its simplicity, from this aspect, is almost dour. The forms of the house are bold, and the brickwork is unornamented. Its roof is covered with brownish-red tile that blends with the red brick that gives the house its name. To the southeast, the L-shaped house opens up to embrace the garden. In the approximate center of the garden is an eye-catching well head with a steep conical roof. This roof provides a focus point for the garden side of the house, and it is no wonder that the view from this direction is the one most commonly used to illustrate the house.

Inside the house, wide corridors lead to spacious, conveniently (for the period) planned rooms, including a formal dining room on the ground floor and a drawing room and a studio on the floor above. Behind the scenes, the house is supported by a full kitchen with scullery and several store

rooms. Today it may take some effort to imagine two young people starting life in such a house. The size of the house is not surprising when one considers that, although Jane was from a humble background, Morris grew up in very comfortable circumstances and, at the time he was building the house, he had independent income.

For a time, Red House served the purpose Morris envisioned. He, Jane, and their other young friends would gather there for weekends. “Oh the joy of those Saturdays to Mondays at Red House,” Burne-Jones’s wife Georgiana later wrote.⁴ The walls and furniture (designed by Webb) were covered by colorful paintings by William and Jane Morris, Burne-Jones, Rossetti and his wife Elizabeth (Lizzie) Siddal, and Charles Faulkner. The evenings were filled with food, drink and laughter.

The idyll was short lived, however. In May of 1861 the Rossetti’s child was stillborn, and in February of the next year Lizzie died of a (probably self-administered) overdose of laudanum. Before 1864 Morris had hoped that the Burne-Jones family (which now included a son, Philip, with another child on the way) would join him, Jane, and their two

artistic life at Red House. In the autumn of 1865 the Morrises left Red House, never to return. They moved to a flat “over the shop” of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., in Queens Square, London.⁵

Kelmscott Manor—a Mature Retreat

In 1871 Morris wrote Charles Faulkner that he had been looking for “a house for the wife and kids... a little house deep in the country where she and the children are to spend some months each year.”⁶ Kelmscott Manor, the “beautiful and strangely naïf”⁷ house he found, is located at the south edge of Kelmscott village in west Oxfordshire, only twenty miles west of Jane Morris’s native Oxford. In the late nineteenth century it was an agricultural village with a population that ranged between 101 in 1881 and 164 in 1901. In many ways it still resembles the place Morris knew. The small and winding upper Thames, where Morris enjoyed fishing, is a short walk south of the house.⁸

Unlike the straight walls of carefully laid brick at Red House, the walls of Kelmscott Manor appear to show their age (though, as will be discussed later, that appearance is



Kelmscott Manor from the east, showing the twentieth-century window above the porch. Photo by author.

daughters, Jenny and May, to live at Red House. To accommodate this, Webb drew up plans to add another wing to the house. The new wing would be subtly differentiated from the old by the use of walls covered with half-timbering and hung tiles. By 1864, though, Burne-Jones’s career was heading in its own direction, and the death of his second child, a boy, may have provided him with a pretext to decline Morris’s offer regarding a communal life at Red House. By 1865 the Morrises had a very different life-style than they had in 1859. Along with having two growing daughters, Morris was now commuting to town as a director of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co., the firm that grew out of the

sometimes deceiving, due to later restoration). The earliest section of the house dates from the late Elizabethan period, around 1600. This section is C-shaped (or as Morris described it, “the shape of an E with the tongue cut out”),⁹ with the mouth of the C facing west. Around 1670 a square two-and-one-half story wing was added to the northeast side. This gives the house the appearance of being L-shaped, and, like Red House, it embraces a garden to the southeast. Again like Red House, the view of the house from this direction is its most familiar image, due, in part, to Morris himself, who used a drawing from this aspect by artist Charles Gere to illustrate his book *News from Nowhere*.

Morris's motivation for finding a second home was more complex than might be expected for a businessman approaching middle age. His marriage was not going well. Jane Morris came from a working-class background in Oxford where Rossetti "discovered" her in 1857. It would be unfair and probably inaccurate to say that she married Morris simply for his money, but an economic motivation for her to do so may have been powerful. Any attraction Rossetti felt for Jane when they met was apparently sidelined by his engagement and later marriage to Lizzie Siddal, but after Siddal's death in 1862, a relationship developed between Jane and Rossetti. Though scholars have debated the degree to which that relationship was a physical one, by 1871 Morris probably felt it was best to provide a harbor for his wife away from London to save her from being a target of gossip.

So, Morris and Rossetti, together, leased Kelmscott Manor beginning in June 1871. Morris spent one day in Kelmscott after Jane and their daughters, along with Rossetti, moved into the house. He then quickly headed off to pursue his own passion, Norse culture, on a long trip to Iceland. Morris's apparent willingness to allow Jane and Rossetti's relationship to play itself out still appears amazingly accepting. And play itself out it did, but not before Morris had reached the end of his tolerance with the arrangement. In November of 1872 he wrote to his friend Aglaia Coronio: "Rossetti has set himself down at Kelmscott as if he never meant to be away;...it really is a farce our meeting when we can help it."¹⁰ Further complicating the situation was the dissolution in early 1874 of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., of which Rossetti was one of the partners. Morris was ready to be in business on his own, and he was also ready to stop cohabitating, even in name, with Rossetti. On April 16, 1874, he wrote Rossetti, "As to the future though I will ask you to look upon me as off my share [of the Kelmscott lease], & not to look upon me as shabby for that, since you (may) have fairly taken to living at Kelmscott, which I suppose neither of us thought the other would do when we first began the joint possession of the house".¹¹ At this point, Rossetti, who ultimately was not interested in having the place to himself, quit the house. Morris then shared the lease for some years with his friend, publisher and fellow angler, F.S. Ellis, with whom he shared the joys of fishing on the Thames. Thus, for the next twenty-two years, until Morris's death in 1896, the family was able to enjoy the place in a much less complicated ménage.

Jane and daughters Jenny and May continued to spend their summers at Kelmscott, with Morris there as much as his busy schedule would allow. Morris and Jane's complicated relationship was touched on at his death when she told a friend enigmatically, "I am not unhappy, though it is a terrible thing, for I have been with him since I first knew anything."¹² After Morris's death, Jane continued to live at Kelmscott, finally buying the freehold to the property in 1913, the year before her death. On Jane's death the house was left to May (Jenny was an invalid due to epilepsy), who moved there permanently in 1923. On May's death in 1938 she left the house to Oxford University to be used as housing for the University.

Morris altered Kelmscott Manor relatively little during his tenancy. Like an urbanite escaping the pressures of modern life, he enjoyed its rusticity. He would make solitary visits in winter, when the ascetic side of his nature could revel in the

house's lack of creature comforts. The austerity of the house was not always to contemporary taste. In 1896 visitor Maud Sambourne described the "plain, painfully plain, dining room."¹³ Sambourne's comment is of particular note, since she was the daughter of *Punch* cartoonist Linley Sambourne and grew up in 18 Stafford Terrace, London, which is now the Linley Sambourne Museum. While the Sambourne House contained several Morris-designed wallpapers, its well-appointed interiors display a *horror vacui* that was a far cry from the simplicity of Kelmscott.

The physical layout of Kelmscott also confused some nineteenth-century visitors. While at Red House large corridors connect conveniently placed rooms, at Kelmscott one room follows another, with few corridors taking up space. This was particularly noticeable to nineteenth-century eyes. To reach the Tapestry Room, the upper floor sitting room, from the stairway, one had to cross through William Morris's own bedroom! As Morris described it, "you have to go from one room into another, to the confusion of some of our casual visitors, to whom a bed in the close neighbourhood of a sitting room is a dire impropriety."¹⁴ It was a situation with which Morris was clearly quite content.

Something of Morris's deep feelings for Kelmscott Manor can be found in *News from Nowhere*, his 1890 utopian tale. In the book the narrator, William (of course), falls asleep in industrial nineteenth-century London to wake up in an ideal, truly communist utopia of the future; the state has withered away. Taking a boat trip up the Thames, William arrives at a fictionalized Kelmscott Manor. Here his companion, Ellen, says of the house, "Oh me! How I love the earth...and all that grows out of it,—as this has done!"¹⁵ The idea of the house growing from and at one with its site contrasts with the newly built Red House. Red House is a site of youthful enthusiastic creation of the new. Kelmscott is a site of mature contentment with the enduring. At Red House the past was evoked by wall paintings of Arthurian tales, while at Kelmscott the very fabric of the house connects one to the past. For Morris, the past was something to be appreciated and lived with, not altered to fit current, transient, needs. As will be seen, this approach to Kelmscott was consonant with his general views of preservation.

Preservation

On March 5, 1877, Morris wrote to the Athenaeum: "Sir, My eye just now caught the word 'restoration' in the morning paper, and, on closer look, I saw that this time it is nothing less than the Minster of Tewksbury that is to be destroyed by Sir Gilbert Scott." He went on to say, "What I wish for, therefore, is that an association should be set on foot to keep watch on old monuments, to protest against all 'restoration' that means more than keeping out wind and weather, and, by all means, literary and other, to awaken a feeling that our ancient buildings are not mere ecclesiastical toys, but sacred monuments of the nation's growth and hope."¹⁶ The association that Morris was proposing would, in fact, have its first meeting on March 22, at Morris & Co. and would be called the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. SPAB, also known as "Anti-Scrape" for its opposition to the re-facing of historic buildings, continues to this day as an active force in the United Kingdom preservation movement. The organization advocates restrained intrusion into the fabric of a building. Repairs should be minimal and clearly

identifiable. Layers of history manifested in the fabric of the building are considered by the organization to be a part of the building's interest and should be celebrated.¹⁷

As Morris saw it, repairs and renovations of past centuries, unlike those of the nineteenth century, did not mimic their contexts. He wrote in SPAB's 1877 "Manifesto," "every change (in past centuries), whatever history it destroyed, left history in the gap."¹⁸ Morris's criticism in the Athenaeum was of "restoration" as it was practiced in the nineteenth century. At that time it often included major overhauls of decaying buildings and the creation of building fabric that either replicated original features based on conjecture or completely fabricated sections of a building to completely new designs that appeared to be old. No longer were changes in the building's fabric made obvious. Ironically, it was the coming of the "archeologically correct" Gothic Revival of the nineteenth century that was seen as a particularly great threat to the survival of historic buildings. It was the knowledge of Gothic Revival architects, in particular Sir Gilbert Scott, but not excluding Morris's old boss G.E. Street, that allowed them to renovate early churches in such a way that made the insertion of new components appear seamless.¹⁹

Twenty-first-century scholarship and professional practice have reduced the amount of conjecture implied in the modern use of the word "restoration." We can now rely on microscopic paint analysis to better approximate original colors and dendrochronology to determine the age of building timbers. Still, the idea of "pure" restoration is chimerical. There is still a degree to which all restorations are contemporary interpretations of past building fabric. Decisions regarding priorities will always have to be made, whether in terms of resources to be spent, or periods of significance on which to focus. Determining the degree to which SPAB's tenets of preservation can (and should) be applied to the contemporary house museum is an important part of this process. Red House and Kelmscott Manor each experienced very different post-Morris histories. These histories have a significant effect on decisions regarding the restoration and interpretation of these houses.

After the Morrises left Red House, it was lived in by a series of owners (at times in peril of demolition) until 1952 when it was purchased by two young architects who worked together for the London County Council. Richard Toms and Edward Hollamby and their wives Mary and Doris moved into the house with their young children, creating, in a way, the type of brotherhood that Morris envisioned with Burne-Jones. The Tomses lived in the house until 1956, after which LCC architect Jean MacDonald and her husband David lived with the Hollambys until 1964, when the Hollambys took over the whole house. The Hollambys opened the house regularly, and I was fortunate enough to be guided through the house by a still active Ted Hollamby in June 1999, not long before his death in December of that year. Shortly before Doris Hollamby's death in 2003 the house was sold to the National Trust. At that point it officially became a place of pilgrimage. In spite of Red House's complex ownership history, it remains in generally very good condition, with surprisingly few alterations beyond finishes.

While Red House is fortunate that there has been little in the way of structural alterations to the building, much of the significant decorative work Morris and his friends created on

the interior has been covered by those later finishes. Decisions will have to be made regarding the degree to which these interiors are restored. The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) states, "There should be a presumption in favour of restoring original decoration wherever this may be feasible,"²⁰ but this is only a starting point for discussion. Decisions will probably need to be made on a case-by-case basis. Although the repainting of woodwork is relatively non-invasive, wall paintings are delicate items. Whether restoration means a wall painting is simply to be revealed and cleaned or its colors to be renewed no doubt will depend on the condition of each painting. In the manifesto that Morris wrote for SPAB he warned against restorations that would make a building look, "so that the appearance of antiquity is taken away from such old parts of the fabric as are left, and there is no laying to rest in the spectator the suspicion of what may have been lost."²¹ At this point this sort of restoration has not occurred at Red House. Currently the work of Morris and friends is being revealed, but not "restored" in the nineteenth-century sense. The house is clearly an archeological site. Paint has been removed from walls to reveal faded murals. Battens have been removed from ceilings to reveal bright color. One thing is clear: Red House is now in a very exciting stage of discovery.

After Jane Morris's death Kelmscott Manor was maintained by May Morris as something of a shrine to her father. She wrote in 1926 that she wished it to be left to Oxford University "as a house of rest for artists, men of letters, scholars, and men of science."²² This was an altruistic idea, but her will also included the stipulation that "no modern innovations, improvements, or installations be put in or made to the House in view of its age and its historic interest as a Home of the late William Morris as it is in the same condition as when he left it."²³ This left the University in a difficult position. The expectations of twentieth-century tenants did not align with the rusticity that Morris enjoyed at Kelmscott. The University was able to carry out some updating within the terms of May's will, such as wiring for electricity and plumbing. Eventually though, Oxford came to the decision that it could no longer retain the property. In 1964 ownership passed to the residuary legatee of May's will, the Society of Antiquaries. At that time it was also determined in court that the Society of Antiquaries was not legally bound to the strict interpretation of May's will that had hampered Oxford University. This was fortunate, because when the Society took on the property, years of deferred maintenance necessitated a major restoration.

This restoration, in addition to vital work to stabilize the fabric of the house, included alterations that, in retrospect, may be questioned. Over the course of the twentieth century windows that were blocked up when Morris was alive were opened. Windows which never existed were created. Interior walls were moved and moved again. As noted in Kelmscott Manor's CMP and contrary to the SPAB's manifesto, in some places this work is not readable. For example, during the University's ownership a window was created in the upper floor of the east elevation to light a new bathroom. This window is right in the middle of the view of the house made familiar by the plate from *News from Nowhere*. The issue is made more complicated because the window was enlarged in the 1960s and its surround made to imitate the earlier windows, masking its date. In future restoration work, now



(L to R): Red House study and Drawing Room, showing wall paintings by Burne-Jones and Morris. Photos by author. Courtesy of the National Trust.

that the bathroom is no longer needed, should this window be eliminated? If the historical significance of this view is one of the things that makes the house important, then removing this window makes sense, although this window is itself a record of the house's twentieth-century use. But how is the wall to be reconstituted? Are the window and its surround to be removed completely and stone infill made to match other stone in the area to replicate (as close as possible) its condition during Morris's lifetime? A moderate reading of Morris's ideas might leave some subtle evidence of the twentieth-century window as a clue for future observers. Regardless of the decision, proper documentation of existing conditions is critical. In the 1960s alterations were made to the north elevation of the house to create a new entry vestibule for tourists. Piecing together the history of this side of the house is made more difficult because there was little documentation of the changes. Only one photograph is known to have been taken recording the alterations. Interestingly, May Morris herself was aware of the importance of such documentation when several upstairs rooms were repapered. A note on a section of the old wallpaper stated the rooms were "repapered in May 1930 this is a piece of the old paper left as a record, May Morris."²⁴

Interpretation

Red House is a young museum. For me, instead of feeling like a house museum staged as if the owners had just left the room, its sparsely furnished rooms felt more like the owners had just moved out. This impression is due, no doubt, in part to the fact that the last time I was in the house Ted and Doris Hollamby were living there, and Ted Hollamby was taking me around. I was pleased to see that the twentieth-century desk in the upstairs studio, where he had so proudly

displayed his work with the London County Council, was still there. This desk has become for me a symbol of the conundrum of house museum interpretation. All house museums have multiple stories to tell, and Red House is a structure of many meanings to many audiences. To Morris and his friends it was to be a modern-day "Joyous Gard," a location for a fraternity of artists to create an environment of beauty. Subsequently, architectural historians, notably Nikolaus Pevsner, would write the simple forms of the house into the narrative of the beginnings of the Modern Movement.²⁵ And so it was seen by the Hollambys, the Tomses, and the MacDonalds. Although more recent historians may question the links that were made between Morris and

the Modern Movement and focus attention instead on the decorative work being uncovered at the house, these links were what motivated the families that served as stewards of Red House in the second half of the twentieth century.²⁶ Meanwhile, the work of the LCC architects is open to its own reexamination. The multi-family housing of concrete, brick and glass that they saw as a responsible way to provide shelter for all in a straitened post-War Britain, was decried as inhuman by the end of the twentieth century. Now, from our standpoint in the twenty-first century the later strongly negative view can itself be reexamined in a broader context. Identifying the ways that the story of the Hollambys, et. al., can be told at Red House is a part of the work to be done there. Although Red House's CMP gives primacy to the occupancy of the Morrisises, it also states that: "Red House's importance lies partly in how it has been perceived by later generations, and that these perceptions need to be acknowledged in any policy for its presentation and interp[r]etation."²⁷ It was an accepted practice in the twentieth century (particularly in the United States) to choose one period of significance for a house museum and restore accordingly. As practices of interpretation become less rigid, and our appreciation for multiple historical narratives grows, we have greater opportunity for telling more than just the "Great Man" story of a house. The Hollambys, the Tomses, and the MacDonalds can exist alongside Morris.

History at Kelmscott Manor is even more layered than at Red House, but it doesn't seem so at first glance. The village seems to appear as it did in Morris's day. But preservation this sort of does not happen in the twentieth-first century by chance. The area is monitored by a conservation district. Among the responsibilities of the stewards of the district and

of the Manor itself, is the management of growth (including visitorship at the Manor) so that the village continues to evoke the rural qualities that captivated Morris. It was, after all, the area around Kelmscott, as well as the Manor itself, that drew Morris, and the Morris family's engagement in the village was significantly greater than in the area around Red House. Some of the changes that have occurred there since Morris's time are in the form of buildings initiated by the Morris family. In 1899 Jane Morris commissioned Philip Webb to build a pair of attached workers' cottages as a memorial to her husband. Thus, the family that commissioned Webb's first significant independent design, Red House, also commissioned his last. In 1914 Ernest Gimson designed another set of workers' cottages for May Morris as a memorial to her mother. In 1919 Gimson designed the Morris Memorial Hall for May, though funding did not allow its construction until 1934. These buildings were carefully designed to fit in with the vernacular architecture of Kelmscott and strike no discordant note as one strolls through the village.

At the Manor itself, the significant reconstruction of the house done in the 1960s is hardly detectable without explicit knowledge of the work.²⁸ On the warm summer day that I visited Kelmscott, the peace and quiet of the village could also be found inside the house. It indeed felt like a house the owners had just left. In contrast to Red House, at Kelmscott Manor one is able to see furniture and textiles with a strong Morris provenance. This provenance is complicated, though, because a number of the items in the house came there after Morris's death, especially from Kelmscott House, Morris's house in Hammersmith, London, or from May Morris's house, also in Hammersmith. If the goal were to interpret the house only as it relates to William Morris, the later items become problematic. An interpretation which allows for the layering of time periods, however, views these additions as the result of natural accretions over time, in a house that belonged to one family over generations.

The display of these items is further complicated by the fact that since May's death there have been several subtle alterations to the house that have affected the layout of the collection. A notable example is the Tapestry Room, the upper floor sitting room one had to daringly pass through Morris's bedroom to reach. On walking into the room it appears to be displayed as the Morris would have had it, but appearances are deceiving. The docent must clarify that, in the 1960s, a wood partition that had separated the original roughly square Tapestry Room from a communicating smaller room called the "bachelor's bedroom" was removed. The small room no doubt received this name because of its size and the dubious accessibility of the Tapestry Room through Morris's bedroom. The removal of the wall was justified at the time by the fact that the Tapestry Room was one of a small number of rooms in the house which were then open to the public (the south part of the house was lived in by the curator) and removal of the partition provided additional light and display space in the room. Because of the alteration, though, the tapestries in the room, which pre-dated Morris, had to be rearranged, and a room of

documented use (diaries remain of those who stayed in the bachelor's bedroom, including the artist Charles Gere) was eliminated.

The current CMP proposes a certain amount of restoration, or re-creation, including this partition. Given the tenets of the SPAB manifesto, is this what Morris would have wanted? Is this a fair question? The concept of a house museum as we know it today, not just as a preserved object but as an educational tool for communicating concepts, was in its infancy in Morris's day and not really an issue he was addressing. Nonetheless, issues of authenticity do arise. A more "authentic" interpretation of the Tapestry Room will be allowed by the (to some degree) "inauthentic" recreation of the partition. Furthermore, is the partition itself to be built as though it is clearly new (it will after all mostly be covered with tapestry), or is it to be built using the technique by which it was originally built? This relatively minor location calls for many decisions. It is the recognition of the need for decisions about sometimes conflicting priorities which will ultimately allow for a more coherent presentation. The CMPs for both Red House and Kelmscott Manor acknowledge this and in numerous locations point out the pluses and minuses involved in the choices required.

Rossetti wrote that Red House was "more a poem than a house."²⁹ This can be taken in more than one way. Was it idyllic or ethereal? Does a house museum too often remove the life from a house by trying to preserve the idyllic as a static product? Ted and Doris Hollamby did not want Red House to become a museum "preserved in aspic."³⁰ As Red House now is a museum, one way to avoid the quality of aspic is to focus on what is being discovered in the process of restoration, as opposed to the end goal of "complete" restoration. The ongoing process of research and decision-making at Red House promises to keep the site a place of new discoveries for quite a while. At Kelmscott Manor, the Society of Antiquaries is considering greater engagement



Kelmscott, Memorial Cottages. Designed by Philip Webb, 1899. Built 1902-1903. Photo by author. Courtesy of the National Trust.

with the surrounding village. This will create a larger, and potentially very fluid, context for the interpretation of that house.

The examination of Red House and Kelmscott Manor brings to light a number of issues regarding the preservation of the past. Differences in the houses' ages, environment, as well as stages of Morris's life when he lived in them, help to

expand the range of those issues. At each house thoughtful discussion is taking place to grapple with the ramifications of restoration and interpretation. It is the recognition of the complexity of these processes, and that there is no "one size fits all" solution that makes these houses useful models for in-depth study.



Notes

1. I would like to thank Tessa Wild, National Trust Curator for London and the Southeast, and Sarah Parker, Property Manager at Kelmscott Manor, for their very gracious assistance in providing me with materials for each property, including the Conservation Management Plans (CMP) and their review of this manuscript. While the CMPs are referenced in this article, the conclusions drawn from them are my own.
2. Numerous works tell the story of Morris's life, including his time with Street. The most complete contemporary biography is Fiona MacCarthy's *William Morris, A Life for Our Time*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1995.
3. For histories of Red House see, among others, Edward Hollamby, *Red House*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, 1991, and Jan Marsh, *William Morris and Red House*, National Trust Books, Great Britain, 2005.
4. Quoted in Marsh, 2005, 73.
5. Why Morris left Red House is discussed in Rob Allen, "Why Morris Left His Joyous Gard", *The Journal of William Morris Studies*, volume 13, number 33, 2001, 21-30.
6. Kelvin, Norman, ed., *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, Volume I, The Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1984, 133.
7. Kelvin, 1984, I, 153.
8. For Kelmscott Manor see, especially, Linda Parry, ed. *William Morris: Art and Kelmscott*, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1996, and Alan Crossley, Tom Hassall, and Peter Salway, eds. *William Morris's Kelmscott: Landscape and History*, Windgather Press, Ltd., Bollington 2007.
9. William Morris, "Gossip About an Old House on the Upper Thames," originally published in *The Quest*, number IV, November 1895, retrieved online at www.tfo.upm.es/docencia/ArtDeco/Gossip/Morris/.htm, 19 October, 2014.
10. Kelvin 1984, I, 172.
11. Kelvin 1984, I, 222.
12. Quoted in MacCarthy, 1994, 671.
13. Quoted in Crossley, et. al., 2007, 132.
14. William Morris, 1895.
15. Clive Wilmer, ed., *William Morris: News from Nowhere and Other Writings*, Penguin; London, 1993, 220.
16. Wilmer, 1993, 401-02.
17. SPAB's tenets find some echo in the US in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Standard for Preservation number 3 states, "Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research."
18. Miele, Chris, *From William Morris: Building Conservation and the Arts and Crafts Cult of Authenticity, 1877-1939*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2005, 337-39. The Manifesto can also be found at the SPAB website at www.spab.org.uk/what-is-spab-/the-manifesto/, retrieved 19 October 2014.
19. Along with his concern regarding the "readability" of alterations, Morris had a regard for the inherent importance of age. In this his thought was related to the writings of John Ruskin and others. For a discussion of the relationship of the nineteenth-century Gothic Revival, restoration, and memory see Chris Miele, "Morris and Conservation", in Miele 2005, 30-66.
20. Nicholas Cooper, "Red House, Bexley Heath, A Conservation Plan," an unpublished Conservation Management Plan, 2007, 33.
21. Quoted in Miele, 2005, 338.
22. Quoted in Crossley, et. al., 2007, 131.
23. Parry, 1996, 96.
24. Crossley, et. al., 2007, 132.
25. See, among others, Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design*, Penguin Books, Ltd., London, 1960.
26. Regarding questions around the link made between Morris and the Modern Movement see, among others, David Watkin, *Morality and Architecture*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1977. For Hollamby's perspective see his own book on Red House, where he quotes Pevsner and discusses Morris and Webb's "search for a fundamental honesty of style." Hollamby, 1991, np.
27. Cooper, 2007, 33.
28. See especially: Donald W. Insull, "Kelmscott Manor and Its Repair," in Parry, 1996, 106-22; Jonathan Howard, "Kelmscott Manor as William Morris Never Knew It," in Crossley, et. al., 131-45; John Maddison and Merlin Waterson, "Kelmscott Manor Conservation Management Plan," Consultation Draft, April 2013.
29. O. Doughty and J. R. Wahl, eds., *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1965, II, 436.
30. Quoted in Marsh, 2005, 146.



The Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, c. 1900. Detroit Publishing Company.

Learning from Europe

SAVANNAH'S TELFAIR ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

TANIA JUNE SAMMONS

On May 3, 1886, the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences opened in Savannah, Georgia, establishing a new sophistication in the South. Inspired by European sources and aesthetics, the new museum brought the Old World to Savannah, mixing art, and a bit of science, with the legacy of one of the city's wealthiest families. The story of how this institution came to be sheds light not only on local cultural history but also on the larger collective American past.

As the last heir to the family fortune, which included real estate, furnishings, and large quantities of railroad stock, Mary Telfair (1791-1875) chose to endow her community with the bulk of her great resources. She and her sister Margaret Telfair Hodgson (1797-1874) had taken steps in this direction during their joint lifetimes, but their greater largesse came with their deaths. Mary Telfair, the survivor of the two, set forth her plans in her will, signed only a day before her death, with bequests to churches, orphan and widow charities, a private library, the creation of a hospital for women run by an all-female board that she named, and, a new museum—"a Public Edifice for a Library and Academy of Arts and Sciences."¹

Travel and exposure to other cities, countries and ideas had a large impact on how the Telfair sisters viewed the world; they made four extended visits to Europe, beginning with a full-year excursion between 1841 and 1842. Although devoted to America, they recognized the limitations of their country, especially their hometown. Mary Telfair considered her visits to Europe as opportunities to improve her mind, "and for that reason I force myself to see sights."² She enjoyed seeing places she had previously known only through books, but found Europe superior to America in only one area—the fine arts.

On their first voyage abroad Mary and Margaret took their widowed sister Sarah Haig (1792-1845), and returned home with a man, William Brown Hodgson (1801-1871), whom they had found in Paris. William and Margaret had met within weeks of the sisters' arrival and an immediate attraction led to their marriage eight months later. Mostly self-taught, Hodgson, a Virginian, held an honorary degree from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton). He knew thirteen languages and made a career in the State Department. By the time he met Margaret, he had lived and/or worked in Algiers (where he served as acting American consul), Constantinople, Egypt, Morocco, London and Lima. When he met Margaret he was set to take the post of consul general in Tunis; she agreed to marry him on the condition he resign his post and come to Savannah. He complied.

Hodgson's intellect and natural curiosity greatly affected the Telfair sisters, and from that point forward would

influence their travel decisions in America and Europe. The Hodgsons traveled with Margaret's sisters, and after Sarah died in 1845, they continued to journey with Mary, often with enslaved servants, especially their butler George Gibbons. Their extensive excursions took them to England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Germany, Vienna, Switzerland, and Spain—a Grand Tour of Europe. The party systematically traveled from city to city taking in the famous sights, noting especially the landscape, architecture, churches, palaces, and museums. They were especially entranced by museums, visiting the Capitoline and Vatican Museums in Rome, the Pitti Palace and Uffizi in Florence, the Louvre in Paris and, in 1855, the Paris Exposition.³ Despite their interest in the fine arts, Mary Telfair and the Hodgsons did not collect art, beyond the purchase of a few souvenir paintings they used to decorate their home in Savannah to remind them of their travels abroad.

While the trips to Europe broadened their view of the world, the Telfairs and Hodgsons also increased their understanding of the arts through their extensive travels in the northeastern United States. Beginning at young ages, the Telfair children attended schools in the North, staying with close friends and family. Once they reached adulthood, the family spent their summers in Philadelphia, New York, and various resort towns, including their favorites Saratoga Springs, New York, and Newport, Rhode Island. In 1849, Mary Telfair and the Hodgsons purchased a house in New York City and spent a great deal of time there in the years leading up to the Civil War. Spending so much time away from Savannah allowed them to envision valuable improvements to their hometown, which ultimately led to a more cultivated city. Cultural events, societies, and museums such as the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, founded in 1805, and Hartford's Wadsworth Atheneum, founded in 1842, would have fed their imaginations about the possibilities in their Southern city.

In a codicil to an earlier will from June 13, 1866, Mary Telfair set forth a plan for the use of her home should she survive her sister Margaret. The document stated: "The House is to be a Public Edifice and to be used only for a Library, Academy of Arts, and Museum" and should be called "The Telfair Institute." She changed the wording slightly between this version and her later 1875 version, omitting the words "Institute" and "Museum." The addition of the word "Sciences" to the 1875 document probably reflected her brother-in-law's interest in the subject or the emphasis on science at other institutions such as New York's Cooper Union, founded in 1859.⁴

In the period just after the Civil War, leaders in the Northeast turned their focus toward civic improvements, including museums. An example is the founding of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1870, whose origins began at a Fourth of July party in Paris in 1866, a month after Mary Telfair's June 1866 will.⁵ The Telfairs and Hodgsons, who were then spending a great deal of time in the area, would have learned about these developments from reading newspapers and magazines and from friends and associates. These included Carl Ludwig Brandt (1831-1905), a Danish/German-born and -trained artist who worked in New York. Brandt, a member of the National Academy of Design, lived near the Telfair sisters' childhood friend Frances Few Chrystie in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. Brandt and Hodgson maintained a friendship that included a visit to Savannah in 1856. After William Hodgson died in New York in 1871, Margaret commissioned a portrait of him by Brandt as a memorial, to be housed in the Georgia Historical Society's new library, designed by Danish/German-born, New York-based architect Detlef Lienau (1818-1887). Brandt and Lienau would both figure prominently in the later development of the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences.

There would be a delay before the provisions of Mary Telfair's will could be carried out. Several of her relatives, many of them distant, contested her bequest, citing multiple reasons; including the accusation she had a monomania towards her late brother's family. The case remained in litigation for years and was finally put to rest, in favor of Mary Telfair's estate, by the United States Supreme Court in 1883.⁶ Only then could the executors proceed, and without local expert knowledge in the arts, they looked elsewhere for guidance. Shortly after the court's ruling, in August 1883, the Georgia Historical Society hired Carl Brandt as the Telfair Academy's first director. Although interested in their task to establish a museum, the Society's leaders largely left the creation of the institution in Brandt's hands.

Born in Holstein, Denmark, Carl Brandt grew up on the disputed land between Denmark and Germany, which would eventually end up in possession of the latter. Brandt received his education in both countries, at the Copenhagen Academy of Art followed by an apprenticeship with the Guild of Master Painters in Hamburg. He migrated to the United States in 1852 and rented space at the famous Tenth Street Studios in Manhattan from 1861-66.⁷ Brandt later moved upriver to Hastings-on-Hudson. The gifted artist known for his portraits and landscapes received important commissions from elite patrons, including Astors and Roosevelts. Brandt's inspiration for the establishment of the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences stemmed from his classical training in Europe, which he supplemented with museum visits throughout the continent.⁸

Once hired, Brandt set aside work on the physical structure in order to build an art collection. The Society advanced him \$20,000 from the funds earmarked by Mary Telfair, giving him the opportunity to purchase art, at his discretion, for the new museum. He traveled over 13,000 miles to museums, expositions, private galleries, and studios in Amsterdam, Paris, Munich, Vienna, Berlin, Florence, Naples, Rome, Hamburg, London, and elsewhere. From these visits he secured the purchase of engravings; etchings; oil paintings; more than a thousand photographs and etching reproductions of the "most celebrated pictures and sculptures in Europe;" seventy-nine plaster casts of classical statuary; forty-nine reproduced slabs of the Parthenon frieze; coins; and, Japanese decorative arts. His only noted regret was his failure to secure an oil copy of the *Raphael Madonna* in Dresden.⁹



Entry hall of the Telfair Academy, c. 1900.

After making his purchases, Brandt and the Historical Society leadership began discussing an addition to the main Telfair house. A local architect began the work, but by the summer of 1884 Carl Brandt hired Detlef Lienau, who returned to Savannah to head the museum project more than a decade after designing the Society's library. Also from Holstein, Lienau grew up and trained in the same region as Brandt. He attended elementary and technical schools in Stettin, followed by carpentry apprenticeships in Berlin and Hamburg, and then studied architecture in Munich. Finally, in 1842, Lienau moved to Paris to study with architect Henri Labrousse (1801-1875). Lienau then followed his brother to the United States in 1848. The young architect quickly assimilated and grew a very successful business designing both high-style and modest residential houses and commercial structures, primarily in New Jersey and New York, but also in Rhode Island and Connecticut.¹⁰

With similar origins and both working in the arts, Lienau and Brandt very likely knew each other well. As they worked together on the designs for the addition to the Telfair mansion, the pair no doubt discussed the museums they knew and loved in Europe. Creating a new museum turned out to be a slow, expensive and arduous process that required time and more money than the Society had. Henry Rootes Jackson, the Georgia Historical Society president who believed both in the project and the genius of Carl Brandt, lent the required funds to complete the museum. With growing impatience the Savannah community awaited the opening, whose date continued to be pushed forward. Finally, on February 12, 1885, the Trustees of the Georgia Historical Society temporarily opened the doors for a preview of the site; approximately 1,600 people took advantage of the opportunity. The official opening occurred more than a year later, on May 3, 1886. Another huge crowd, including former president of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis, overflowed the galleries.

Created by Victor Tilgner (1844-1896) and Anton Paul Wagner (1834-1895), statues of noted European artists Phidias, Michelangelo, Raphael, Rubens, and Rembrandt greeted visitors in front of the country's newest museum.¹¹ These sculptures helped distinguish the site as "an institution equal to or approaching very nearly any one of the great galleries of Europe."¹² The English architect William Jay, who designed the family mansion in 1819, had set a classical tone to the museum with his grand portico featuring Corinthian capitals and a Diocletian window above. Carl Brandt added a parapet to the facade with Mary Telfair's required tablet designating the site the "Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences." Two sculpted concrete heads he made of Humboldt and Aristotle flanked this declaration.

A skylight illuminated the entry. Inside, guests were swept away by photographs depicting great European works of art hung on the hall walls under inset plaster reproductions of the south panels of the Parthenon frieze. Visitors were received in the Octagon Room on the left, and Telfair family art and furnishings were also displayed in the former dining room in the south rear room. Known as the Phidias Room, the former drawing rooms on the north side of the house featured the plaster reproductions of the east pediment of the Parthenon. Light drew visitors up the marble staircase into the top floor Picture Gallery (now called the Rotunda). Highlights included *Relics of the Brave*, c. 1883, by British artist Arthur Hacker (1858-1919); *Farmers' Protest*, c. 1882-83, by German painter Ferdinand Brütt (1849-1936); and a series of paintings simulating Renaissance tapestries featuring allegories of the arts by the German artist Claudius von Schraudolph (1843-1902). Later, between the friezes, Brandt would add four of his own paintings featuring Ictinus (architect), Praxiteles (sculptor), Apelles (painter), and Albrecht Dürer (painter and engraver). A skylight allowed sun to filter into the two-story room. At its center, light streamed into a glass oculus dome down into the Sculpture Gallery below, illuminating the massive plaster cast of the *Toro Farnese* from Naples. Other plaster statues surrounded this colossal center piece. Brandt later created several large-scale paintings of ancient locations associated

with the origins of the plaster casts in the room, including Rome, Athens, and the pyramids of Egypt. Smaller objects, such as Japanese bronzes and textiles and Italian wood carvings filled the former bedrooms on the second floor of the main house, along with scientific displays of archeological artifacts such as arrowheads. William Hodgson's old library, located in the northeast room, served as the Academy library. Family books formed the core the holdings, supplemented with volumes donated from local collections on the subjects of botany, engineering and architecture.

One late nineteenth-century writer noted that Carl Brandt created "the finest art academy and gallery in the south, and the equal of many, in merit, in the entire country."¹³ Another writer reviewing the new museum dubbed Brandt a magician who created "a bit of Munich...strayed from the banks of the Iser to the New World and nestled into the heart of the Spanish moss country."¹⁴ Brandt would have been familiar with the ideas of the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841) and art historian Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1794-1868), key creators of Berlin's Altes Museum. These men believed that "the function of the museum (was) first to delight, then to instruct."¹⁵ A local paper documented these sentiments, mimicked by Carl Brandt, in 1884: "At first there will be the museum, which will encourage a greater taste for art in the community...(then) the schools will open as soon as practicable."¹⁶ After the Academy opened in 1886, the artist quickly began teaching classes, using his museum as a platform for his educational ideals.

Carl Brandt continued working for the museum, teaching and adding works to the collection as money allowed, until his death in 1905. Depleted of funds, the museum then stumbled along with help from local philanthropists and visionaries, including artist Gari Melchers (1860-1932) who served as a consultant for many years in the first part of the twentieth century. He guided many important purchases for the museum, including key works by American Impressionists and Ashcan artists. Later, the museum followed mid-twentieth century aesthetics and installed carpeted walls; dropped the ceiling in the Rotunda; replaced decorative frames; destroyed or sold most of the plaster cast



(L to R): *Toro Farnese* in the Sculpture Gallery, 1899. Rotunda, c. 1902.

collection; and removed the Rotunda skylight and oculus. The institution also lost the German tapestry paintings. Brandt's large-scale paintings remain in storage, awaiting conservation. More recently, steps have been taken to bring back to life the historic fabric of Brandt's masterpiece, including the removal of the Rotunda's dropped ceiling and the carpeted walls on both levels of the Annex.

When thinking of early museums in the United States, people naturally envision great institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (1870), and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (1872). These fine establishments became cornerstones of American art culture, but other early museums like the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences answered the cultural needs of the country. From an early nineteenth-century neo-classical townhouse designed for a wealthy Southern planter to a cultural icon dedicated to the fine and decorative arts and sciences at the close of the nineteenth century, the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences still functions as a living, breathing, dynamic museum one hundred and thirty years after first opening in 1886. Thanks to the vision of Mary Telfair and her sister and brother-in-law Margaret Telfair and William Brown

Hodgson, and three international artisans—English architect William Jay, German artist Carl Brandt, and German architect Detlef Lienau—the museum, though located in a small Southern city, stands as a notable temple of art in America.



Today, the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences is one of three sites owned by Telfair Museums. Given to the institution in 1951, the Owens-Thomas House and Slave Quarters, designed by William Jay, c. 1816-19, displays early-mid 19th century fine and decorative arts and tells stories of the free and enslaved people who once lived in the house. The third site, Jepson Center for the Arts, opened in 2006. Designed by Israeli architect Moshe Safdi, the new building expanded the institution's exhibition space and added children's galleries, auditorium, café, and meeting spaces. To contact Telfair Museums, see their website at www.telfair.org or telephone (912) 790-8800.

Notes

1. "...prior to the death of Mrs. Hodgson a scheme had been devised to erect a memorial building to Mr. W. B. Hodgson and present the same to the Georgia Historical Society, and also to make other liberal bequests. Before these projects could be carried out, Mrs. Hodgson died. Miss Telfair, knowing her sister's wishes, proceeded to carry out the original designs." "The Great Will Case," *Savannah Morning News*, June 15, 1877; Last Will and Testament of Mary Telfair, Chatham County Probate Court, Savannah, Georgia. To learn more about Mary Telfair and her family see Charles J. Johnson, Jr. *Mary Telfair: The Life and Legacy of a Nineteenth-Century Woman* (Savannah: Frederic C. Beil, 2002); Betty Wood, ed., *Mary Telfair to Mary Few: Selected Letters, 1802-1844* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2007). For additional information about Mary Telfair and the establishment of the museum, see Charles J. Johnson, Jr., "Mary Telfair's Legacy and the Leadership of Henry Rootes Jackson and Carl Ludwig Brandt," in Hollis Koons McCullough, ed., *Collection Highlights: Telfair Museum of Art* (Savannah: Telfair Museum of Art, 2005).
2. Mary Telfair to Mary Few, July 2, 1842, in Wood, 222; see also Mary Telfair to Mary Few, October 18, 1842, in Wood, 228-230.
3. Mary's biographer Charles J. Johnson, Jr., noted many of the great works of art she viewed and admired in his book, see Johnson, *Mary Telfair*, 306-7.
4. Copy of codicil to Mary Telfair's will, June 13, 1866, in Telfair Family Archives, Telfair Museum.
5. Howard Hibbard, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).
6. For an extensive description of Mary Telfair's will litigation see Chapter 18, "The Telfair Will Contest," in Johnson, *Mary Telfair*.
7. Designed by Richard Morris Hunt, this important building represented the first structure erected specifically for artists in America; see Annette Blaugrund, *The Tenth Street Studio Building: Artist-Entrepreneurs from the Hudson River School to the American Impressionists* (Southampton, New York: The Parrish Museum, 1997).
8. For more information about Carl Ludwig Brandt, see David Willis McCullough, "Carl Brandt: Hasting's Other 19th-Century Painter," *Hastings Historian* (Summer 2000).
9. Record Book, Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, c. 1883-1903, Telfair Museums' archives.
10. For more information about Detlef Lienau, see Ellen Weill Kramer, *The Domestic Architecture of Detlef Lienau, a Conservative Victorian* (West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania: Infinity Publishing, 2006).
11. For a full history of these statues, see Jane Van Nimmen, "Telfair's Artist Statues: From Vienna to Savannah," in Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Laurinda S. Dixon, eds., *Twenty-First-Century Perspectives on Nineteenth-Century Art: Essays in Honor of Gabriel P. Weisberg* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008).
12. "Telfair Academy: To Be Opened Next Thursday," *Savannah Times*, February 9, 1885, Georgia Historical Society Vertical file, Publicity Folder #1.
13. Col. I. W. Avery, "Our Chef D'Oeuvre: The Glories and the Value of Her Telfair Academy," *Savannah Morning News*, January 19, 1893, 5.
14. "Monthly Record of American Art," *The Magazine of Art*, c. 1886, Telfair Museums' archives.
15. Thomas W. Gaehtgens, "Altes Museum, Berlin: Building Prussia's First Modern Museum," in *The First Modern Museums of Art: The Birth of an Institution in 18th-and Early 19th-Century Europe*, edited by Carole Paul (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012), 290.
16. "A New Southern Art Museum," *Savannah Morning News*, May 25, 1884, 5.

Preservation Diary

Iviswold Castle, Rutherford, New Jersey

WARREN ASHWORTH

ANNABELLE RADCLIFFE-TRENNER

Those people who consider themselves rational might not countenance the idea that a house can be lucky or have the lives of a cat. But few houses have escaped ruin as many times as Iviswold Castle, which survived despite years of neglect, at least four foreclosures, a murder-suicide, and a fateful Pearl Harbor Day decision.

In 2014 the Victorian Society in America awarded two prizes for outstanding merit in Preservation. Foremost among those projects was “The Castle,” as it is affectionately known around Rutherford, New Jersey. Its extensive renovation satisfied the high standards for the award which include faithful restoration to the extent possible given the use. One of the main missions of the Society is to recognize and encourage careful and accurate preservation of American architecture built during the Victorian Era. The award acknowledges that Iviswold is a showpiece of the preservationist’s art, but that it survived at all is uncanny.

The History

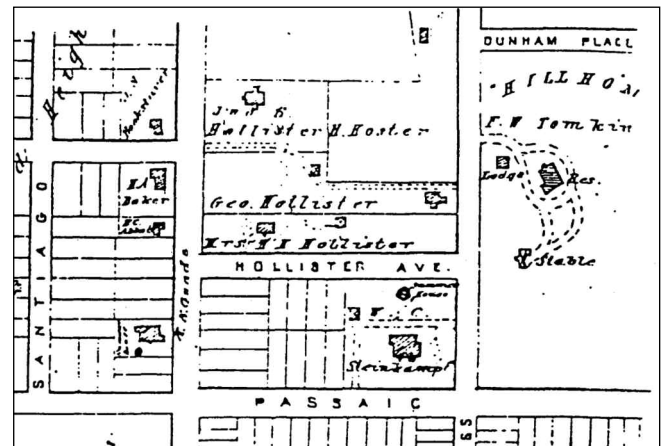
Iviswold, originally known as Hill Home, was built in 1869 by a local land speculator, Floyd Tomkins. This original building was a modest three story house with a mansard roof. Mr. Tomkins’ speculations left him very vulnerable when the Great Panic of 1873 happened and as a result, Hill Home was foreclosed on for the first time in 1879.

Sweeping up casualties of that panic, book publisher David Brinkerhoff Iveson bought Hill Home and numerous adjacent properties in the early 1880s. (His company eventually came to be known as the American Book Company; it produced the famous McGuffey Reader, the universal elementary school text book.) He engaged an architect from Ithaca, New York, William H. Miller, to transform the house into a grand country home which he named Iviswold Castle. Miller was responsible for many country and city houses for New York patricians as well as about eighty buildings on or near the Cornell University campus. In 1888 the new, much larger, house was finished and three years later *Scientific American, Builders and Architects Edition* called Iviswold “the most picturesque and best-appointed country home in the vicinity of New York City.”¹ It was a high-Victorian agglomeration of local brownstone, pebble and dash panels, wood trim with red tile roofs galore.² At the time of the recent restoration a census indicated forty-three roofs including dormers, turrets and the original mansard roof of Hill Home. The house must have been particularly impressive for the time, located as it was in then-rural New Jersey. The poet and physician William Carlos Williams (1883-1963) grew up in a house across Passaic Avenue (now West Passaic Avenue) from Iviswold Castle. Of the year 1888 he writes:

It is hard to recall the small village in which I grew up.

Imagine! No sewers, no water supply, no gas, even. Certainly no electricity; no telephone, not even a trolley car. The sidewalks were of wood...the streets were not paved at all...

When the Iveson (sic) mansion was finally completed across the street from us, and on the night of the wedding of the son or daughter, I forget which, the worm of gaslights from the house to the street was lighted, the house ablaze with lights, the guests arriving from the railroad station—a continuous row of carriages—it was the finest sight I ever saw.³



(Top to bottom): 1876 Bergen County, New Jersey Atlas showing Tomkin’s “Hill Home”, upper right. Exterior view of Iviswold Castle, south elevation.

Iverson occupied the Castle until 1901, the year of another stock market panic. In 1902 the house and its contents were sold at a sheriff's sale, and Iverson died shortly thereafter, in 1903. In less than four years it then went through several owners and two more sheriff's sales until it was bought and held by Solomon Milton Schatzkin, who lived there with his family for nineteen years adding, along the way, a two-story indoor pool structure.

But the key figure in how this lucky house was repurposed and saved is one Peter Sammartino. It all began one evening in 1933 while he was sitting with his fiancée Sally Scaramelli on the front porch of her parents' house across the street from Iviswold Castle. The 37-room, 18,000-square-foot mansion had been abandoned for some years, having been foreclosed upon yet again at the beginning of the Great Depression by the Rutherford National Bank. And it was falling into disrepair. Sammartino, a graduate of Columbia University Teacher's College, had been involved for years with its experimental New College, an incubator of ideas about progressive higher education. He started telling Sally what a perfect venue the Castle would be for a college, for New Jersey at the time had a dearth of educational venues.

Shortly after they were married in December of that year, the Sammartinos put together a group of fifteen nearby high school principals as advisors and others were later added. After years of discussion, the educators and business partners gathered on December 3, 1941, and voted to start the college. The principal investor was the head of the bank that had foreclosed the property, Colonel Fairleigh Dickinson. But almost immediately, on December 7, the "day of infamy" when Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese, they were given cause to rethink that decision. The next day they met again to reconsider. Although outsiders thought the undertaking foolhardy at such a time, they unanimously resolved to continue with the plan, and the school was inaugurated. It was named for Dickinson, its primary backer.⁴

In his autobiography, Peter Sammartino would write about his fateful decision:

One day I was sitting on the veranda of the house of my future father-in-law, enjoying two martinis. Had I just one, I doubt Fairleigh Dickinson College would be in existence today.⁵

The first class graduated during wartime and was composed of 59 women and one man. By the time of Sammartino's death in 1992, the school was the largest private college in New Jersey with five campuses around the state.

Peter and Sally Sammartino were devoted not only to the college and its extraordinary growth but were also committed to the preservation of local architectural heritage. Some years after retiring as head of the college in 1967, Peter helped to spearhead the massive effort to restore Ellis Island, the famed entry place for immigrants to the United States, which was threatened with demolition by its owner, the National Park Service. He and others successfully appealed to Congress for funds to salvage the main building and raised awareness nationally about the importance of the preservation of this landmark.⁶

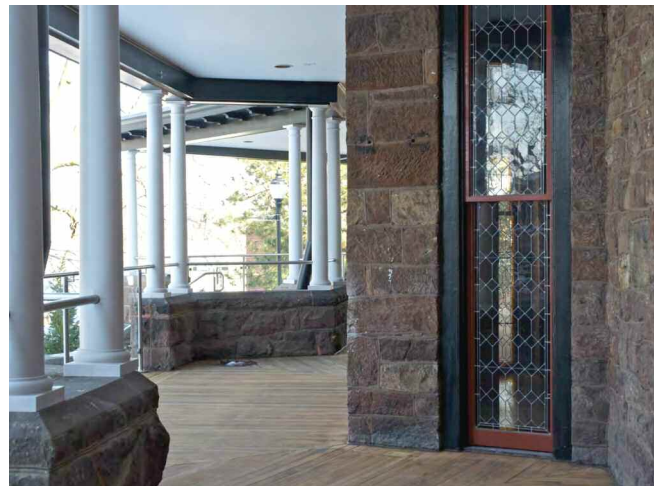
Along the way, Sammartino chose another grand mansion and saved it from ignominy as well. Florham, the Twombly-Vanderbilt estate in Madison, New Jersey, designed by McKim, Mead and White in 1897 and modeled on Hampton Court outside London, was purchased for one of the five satellite campuses that came to comprise Fairleigh Dickinson University. The well-preserved main building is now known as Hennessey Hall.

Another remarkable example of Sammartino's prescient preservation sense is cited in William Neuman's *Rutherford: a Brief History*:

When the medical supplier Becton, Dickinson and Company (in which Fairleigh Dickinson the man was involved) was expanding in the mid-1950s, it was set to demolish a nineteenth-century Dutch colonial structure called the Ackerman-Outwater House (originally at 162 Hackensack Street, East Rutherford). Edgar Williams (architect brother of William Carlos Williams) convinced Sammartino to save the Dutch house by allowing Williams to move it (stone by stone) and join it to the university-owned Yereance-Kettel House at 245 Union Avenue...This (antique Dutch) structure was already being renovated by Williams for Fairleigh Dickinson's educational use. By 1957, the Ackerman-Outwater House was successfully moved and joined to the Kettel House. This proved to be an outstanding solution for all parties and greatly aided the structures' continued preservation.⁷



(L to R): South elevation, before restoration. Photo by HBA. South elevation, after restoration from 2004 to 2006. Photo by Sharron Curia.



(L to R): View of the piazza before and after restoration. Photos by Richard Trenner.

But now the story takes a sudden and surprising turn. In 1992, watching his wife Sally at 88 suffering with Alzheimer’s disease and seeing his own health failing at age 87, he shot and killed her and then himself and left behind the following note:

We have lived far longer than most people. From now on it’s mostly downhill. Soon I will be inactivated. Sally will succumb to the ravages of Alzheimer’s Disease... It’s about time we get out of the way and leave room for the young people...We have lived joyously for 58 years. Now because of the ravages of disease, we spend every hour of the day in a catatonic state. This doesn’t make sense.

—Peter Sammartino.⁸

In 1993, shortly after Sammartino’s death, the board of Fairleigh Dickinson University decided to abandon their original campus and its centerpiece, Iviswold Castle. There was no room left to expand and increasing dissent about taxes among town officials regarding the school. The Castle once again stood empty and vulnerable to decay. There were numerous leaks in the roofs, raccoons in residence, and significant disrepair throughout. Mercifully, Felician College, a private Roman Catholic institution, acquired the entire campus in 1997 and in 1999 commenced an immense restoration project for Iviswold Castle headed by the firm Historic Building Architects (HBA), of Trenton, New Jersey.

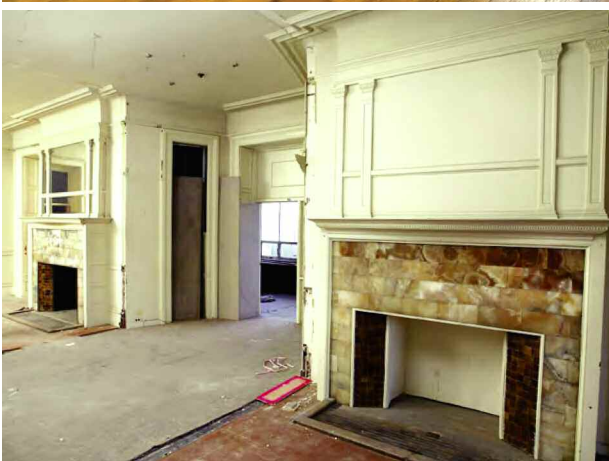
The Restoration

Ironically, despite Sammartino’s commitment to the preservation of the exteriors of historic structures, his institution was not particularly interested in maintaining historic interiors. Almost every surface inside Ivison’s original house had been covered over with dropped ceilings, gypsum board partitions, plywood panels or multiple coats of paint.

The restoration team’s first work was to complete an emergency roof stabilization project to prevent more water from coming in and damaging the interior finishes. After this was completed in 1999, Historic Building Architects prepared a Historic Structures Report for the building that included listing the Castle on the National Register of Historic Places. This study of the building’s history was funded in large part by a planning grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust. In 2000, HBA determined that, to assess the condition of the building accurately, a careful “selective demolition” project should be undertaken. A chief aim of the project was to remove all the contemporary partitions and ceilings that concealed the historic finishes. To everyone’s surprise, there was much left of the original Castle, including decorative painted ceilings, plaster cornices, walnut paneling, and most of the wood floors. It was clear that the contractors who had covered over the original finishes in the 1970s had taken unusual care to minimize their impact on the historic house.



(L to R): The window seat in what was once the Dining Room. Photo by HBA. The window seat, restored in what is now the Main Conference room. Photo by Shannon Curia.



For example, beams used to support contemporary suspended ceilings were carefully placed to minimize damage to plaster cornices. One of the most exciting discoveries was found intact above a dropped acoustical ceiling—a spectacular quarter-scale replica of the *Cantoria* frieze by Luca Della Robbia from the Duomo in Florence.⁹

In 2004 the exterior restoration of the Castle began with crucial help from a \$750,000 grant from New Jersey Historic Trust as well as several grants from the Bergen County Historic Preservation Grant Program. The exterior restoration included the forty-three roofs, thirty-one of which were shaped clay-tile roofs covering turrets and towers with decorative tile features, such as finials with lighting-rod protectors designed as birdbaths. It was completed by 2006 and received both a state preservation award and an award from Bergen County.

In 2007 the planning for the interior restoration began. Among the most significant features of the interior of the Castle are its windows. The entire apse of the Music Room is lined with a succession of beautifully finished stained glass windows depicting cranes, and the finely executed decorative painted glass in the dining room depicts important Scottish figures such as Mary Queen of Scots and Robert Burns.¹⁰ Several of these stained glass windows are attributed to the celebrated artist John LaFarge. The interior work received additional grants from New Jersey Historic Trust for restoration.

One of the most exciting aspects of this adaptive reuse project is the ease with which the space requirements of Felician College fits with the original uses and layout of the Castle as designed by William H. Miller. For example, the conference/board room was originally the dining room, the reception room was originally the drawing room, and the chapel was originally the music room. Many of these spaces were restored based on information provided in the 1891 *Scientific American, Architects and Builders* article noted previously.

But it was not just the public rooms that worked so well with the program for the adaptive use. Bedrooms became offices and, wherever possible, the college made decisions to repair and restore the existing spaces and materials rather than demolish them, including the floors and plaster ceilings. Another dramatic discovery was the decorative painted fresco ceiling hidden behind wallpaper in the reception room. The fresco was restored in consultation with conservators to recreate the three-bay ceiling



(Top to bottom): The Main Entry Hall, showing the original staircase. The staircase had been removed by Fairleigh Dickinson during their ownership of the building. The grand staircase was replicated using historic photographs. Photo by Shannon Curia. The Living Room, before and after restoration. Photos by HBA.

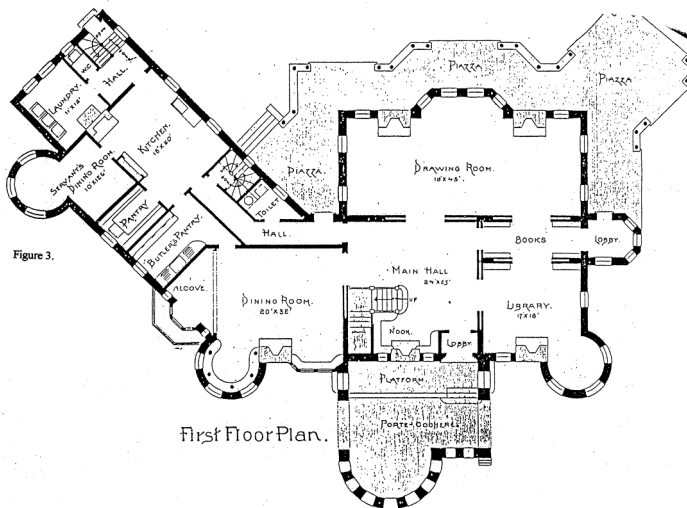


Figure 3.

First Floor Plan.

with a painted pergola dividing two decorative *trompe l'oeil* ceilings on either side.

All the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems in the building were incorporated into the fabric of the Castle, thereby ensuring maximum use of space. Schatzkin's indoor swimming pool was converted to a mechanical room to feed the offices and conference room spaces above. Providing barrier-free access involved replacing a servants' dumbwaiter with a new elevator, carefully woven into the historic fabric to minimize damage to the existing building.

Iviswold Castle's restoration gives us an encouraging example of how an imaginative new user can adapt a threatened existing building, extending its life and community presence far into the future. During the course of the well-ordered fourteen year restoration, Felician College has systematically raised and deployed the approximately \$9,000,000 needed. In doing so, its new owner has given Iviswold an important new life, simultaneously conserving the extraordinary building and providing 18,000 square feet of unique space to welcome all members of its community for generations to come.

Lucky, lucky house.



Notes

1. *Scientific American, Builders and Architects Edition*. May, 1891.
2. The cost of Miller's project was reported to be \$350,000.00. The cost of the original house was \$34,000.00. Historic Structure Report, Iviswold Castle at Felician College. April 2, 2004. Section 8, pages 1, 2.
3. William Carlos Williams, *The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams*. (New York: New Directions, 1967), 279-280.
4. Dickinson also ran a very successful surgical instruments company, Becton, Dickinson and Company, out of Rutherford, NJ. William Neuman, (2013-11-04), *Rutherford: A Brief History*. (The History Press, Kindle Edition.) Kindle location 1988.



(L to R): First floor plan, as designed by William H. Miller. *Scientific American Architects and Builders*, May 1891. Historic view of the Music Room. Music Room, restored and converted into the Chapel, with the original *Cantoria* on the upper wall. Photo by Shannon Curia.

5. Neuman, Kindle location 1980.
6. A landmark through which his parents had entered America. Neuman, Kindle Locations 1886-1893.
7. Neuman, Kindle Locations 2051-2054.
9. There is no record yet found to indicate if Peter Sammartino was responsible for guiding the 1970's interior alterations to this college building. It seems unlikely that an individual so engaged in the spirit of preservation would, in particular, approve the demolition of the elaborate and elegant grand staircase painstakingly rebuilt in the recent restoration.
10. The name Iviswold is David Ivison's concocted combination of his last name and a Scottish and Middle English word meaning "unforested plain."

Furthermore. . .

Gervase Wheeler, Revisited

RENÉE E. TRIBERT

JAMES F. O'GORMAN

A few years ago we published a study in this magazine of the mid-nineteenth-century English architect Gervase Wheeler (c.1824-1889). We examined his nearly thirteen-year American career with the resources available at the time.¹ Since then, new information has come to light. It is presented here, within the context of what was already known, to stimulate future research into the work of this important immigrant contributor to our architectural history.

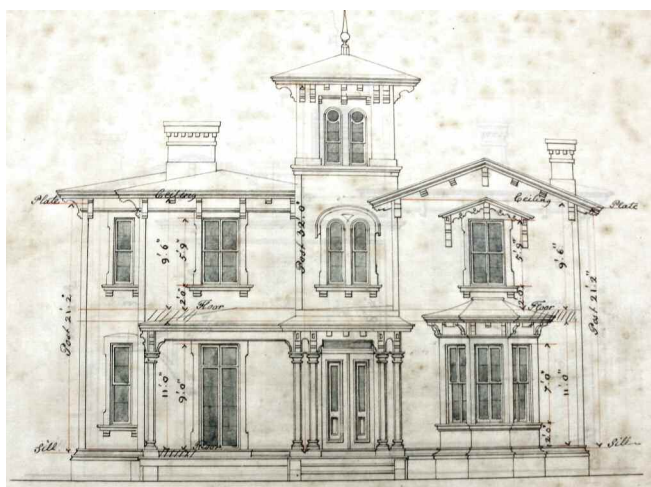
Wheeler arrived in New York in February 1847; he returned to England in January 1860. During this time, he designed buildings in New York, Maine, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Connecticut, and published numerous articles and two books. He espoused the Picturesque in architecture, and offered practical information for American domestic buildings.

Wheeler was also quite comfortable expressing his opinions about the design work of others, leading on occasion to strained relationships. Such was notably the case with fellow architect Richard Upjohn (1802-1878). Within the first two months of his arrival, the young Wheeler had been

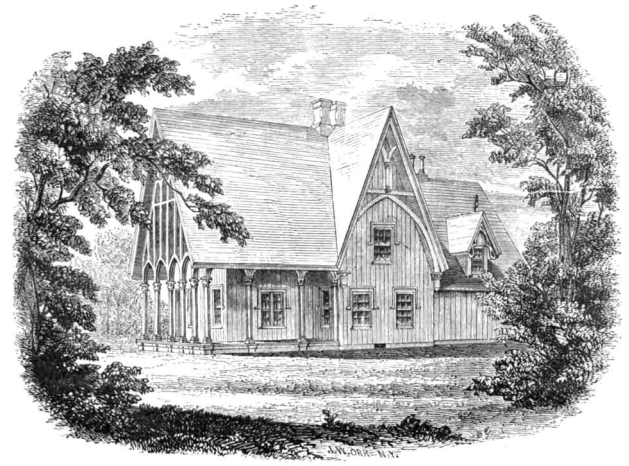
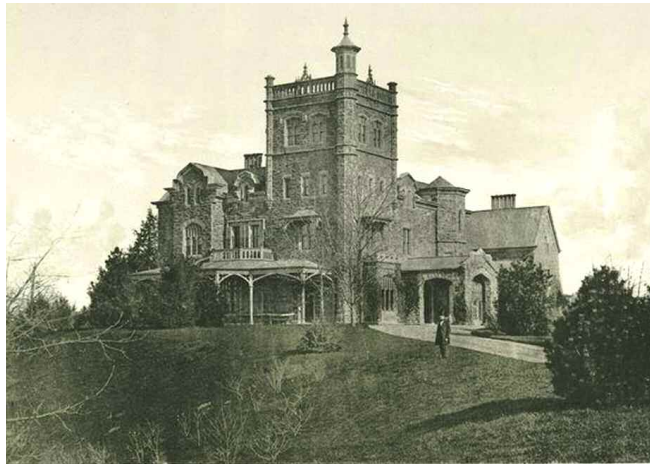
in contact with Upjohn, at this time well established in his career. He was also introduced to the President of Bowdoin College, Leonard Woods, who was overseeing construction of the college chapel designed by Upjohn. Woods sought a more colorful interior than Upjohn had proposed. Wheeler offered a polychrome scheme more to Woods's liking, and declared that Upjohn's designs lacked in "unity of effect."² Several years later, in 1851, both men were working in Norwich, Connecticut and it appears that Wheeler provoked Upjohn with his outspokenness. Upjohn wrote to Woods that Wheeler was "interfering with my church there which is unfinished for want of means to carry out the design. In order that his mischievous pranks may be headed off I wish you to...send me something by which I may stop his capering—do it forthwith."³ As far as we know, this marks the end of any personal interaction between the two architects.

Having read the published account of Wheeler, a collateral descendant in England, Nicolas Boles, contacted us. He brought to our attention additional information and informed speculation about the architect's family. It was, he notes, a prosperous family with estates in Hereford and Worcester. The architect's father, however, was the younger son of a younger son, and so, by his own right, became an artisan who achieved success and affluence. In his *Homes for the People*, Wheeler mentions his father's cottage as an early design of an important British architect. The cottage is thought to be Elm Villa, Nether Street in Finchley, listed as the family residence in the 1841 census. Boles suggests that the architect might have been Anthony Salvin, a neighbor at Elm House, and sometime employer of A. W. N. Pugin's decorative skills. Boles also provides an explanation for the dates of Wheeler's stay in America: Wheeler's father had died in 1840, and Wheeler himself may have attained the age of inheritance in 1846, allowing him the financial means to travel; his return to England was likely due to his mother's death at the end of 1859.

Back in England, Wheeler continued to practice, becoming a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (F.R.I.B.A.) in March 1867. At the time of our earlier publication English scholars had been unable to unearth any buildings by him. Boles's most significant contribution pointed us toward a set of drawings for a rather ordinary town house at Margate (where Wheeler's family may have originally been from and where the architect had an office c.1867-1869) in the Kent History and Library Centre.⁴ It was presumably designed for E. Isaacson Esq., whose name appears on the front elevation along with the date 22 November 1867. Isaacson was a solicitor and registrar at the County Court in Margate. The six sheets, some signed with



(Top to bottom): Gervase Wheeler, North elevation, unidentified Italianate Villa, 1855. First story plan, 1855. Library of Congress.



(L to R): “Rockwood”, as it appeared in A. A. Turner’s *Villas on the Hudson*. Henry Olmstead house, at East Hartford, Connecticut. Southeast elevation, as illustrated in *Homes for the People*.

the F.R.I.B.A. initials, propose a two-story box edged with quoins, with hip roof, angled bay, and side entrance. It is a constrained design unlike his freer American compositions, which of course were usually intended for rural sites. The Kent drawings suggest that others might be found in local English collections.

In America Wheeler published two important books on domestic architecture, *Rural Homes* (1851) and *Homes for the People* (1855), that rivaled those of Andrew Jackson Downing. Downing’s books, such as *The Architecture of Country Houses*, tended to illustrate house suggestions rather than built works; Wheeler’s books frequently illustrated projects that he had already built. However, the houses illustrated were often too vaguely located to identify.

New information about Wheeler’s work came through Karl Kabelac, a retired special collections librarian. Kabelac, after reading our book, kindly brought to our attention the online resources of fultonhistory.com. This searchable database of New York newspapers provided many notices and news items from the 1850s which mention Wheeler. In 1854, Wheeler sought estimates for erecting and outfitting a gas-house for a country home; plans could be reviewed at his office, but the location of the house was not given.⁵

A real estate notice in the *New York Evening Post* in 1855 offered a new fourteen-room house situated in Stockbridge in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. It listed Gervase Wheeler as architect. This may have been the unnamed house situated on the Lenox Road one mile from Stockbridge, and described in *Homes for the People*.⁶ We know from his writings that he was prepared to design not just a residence but landscape and outbuildings as well, and here the fourteen-acre estate included a stable, carriage house, ice house, two laborers’ cottages, and an orchard, the whole supplied by spring water carried by aqueduct.⁷

Another real estate ad of 1855 offered the John H. Boswell house at Hartford as “large and commodious” and “built of brick in the most substantial manner and finished in modern

style...after a design by Wheeler who superintended the erection.” The location commanded a view of the Connecticut River valley and included a brick barn, carriage house, and orchard on several acres.⁸ It is interesting to note that this was one of two commissions linked to Boswell. The owner of *The Hartford Courant* from 1836 to 1854, the year of his death, Boswell advocated for the development of a public park proposed by Horace Bushnell on forty acres in Hartford. The park was approved through a popular vote in January 1854, and Wheeler submitted the winning design that year (by the time work on the park actually began in 1861, another landscape design was chosen).

A previously unknown residential project, not included in his books but surely from the same period, is an unidentified design preserved in a bound album of seven drawings in the Library of Congress.⁹ Finding this new resource was

serendipity. Wheeler’s name came up in casual conversation between James O’Gorman and Ford Peatross, Prints and Photographs Division at the Library of Congress, and Peatross remembered a set of the architect’s drawings in the vast uncatalogued section of his department. We are now able to reproduce an elevation from that collection showing it as a typical mid-century Italianate villa, the type of domestic design Wheeler illustrated and discussed in his published works.

The designs in Wheeler’s books must have found imitation in many domestic projects still to be discovered.

As we noted in our monograph, his Boody house in Brunswick, Maine, was repeated over and over. His Henry Olmstead house of 1849 at East Hartford, Connecticut, inspired the Joseph Warren Revere house of 1854 at Morristown, New Jersey.¹⁰ These imitations or adaptations could have been taken directly from his books, or from republications of his designs in the periodical press or in books produced by others. Rockwood, Wheeler’s mansion for Edward Bartlett at North Tarrytown, New York, of 1849, we now know, inspired the William C. Neff house in Cincinnati of 1864-67 by Thomas Sargent. Here the

GERVASE WHEELER,
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Advertisement for Wheeler’s services, 1855.

intermediate sources were probably the two images of Bartlett's house that appeared in A. A. Turner's *Villas on the Hudson* of 1860.¹¹

Wheeler promoted himself through ads for his services placed in local papers in New York City, upstate New York and elsewhere. In these he said he was ready to supply designs for public buildings, stores, churches, and private dwellings as well as landscape gardening, rustic outbuildings, and to supervise their erection in city or country.¹² He also joined the lecture circuit in order to catch the public ear. The annual series in Utica, New York, in the winter of 1855 for example, included speakers as well-known as William Makepeace Thackeray, Henry Ward Beecher, and Starr King. Wheeler in his turn gave two lectures, one on the "Principles of Architecture as Taught by the Past,"¹³ and the other on "Their Present Application, and the Tests of Criticism."¹⁴ The texts of these have yet to come to light, but Wheeler's books and periodical articles surely repeat much of what he said to the Uticans.

His influence in architecture was also felt through Henry Hudson Holly (1834-1892) who apprenticed with Wheeler from 1854 to 1856. A hitherto unknown apprentice was brought to our attention by Jane Barber, historian for the Old First Reformed Church in Park Slope, Brooklyn. During her research of the history of the church building, Ms. Barber found that it's architect, George L. Morse (1836/7-1924) first apprenticed with Wheeler when he was 17. According to Ms. Barber, Wheeler even offered Morse a partnership, although Wheeler returned to England before it was formed, his plans presumably upset by his mother's death.¹⁵

Wheeler's main contribution to the architectural scene in this country in the middle of the nineteenth century is to be found in domestic design, but as we know from the ad cited above and others he aspired to work across the typology of building. He produced a number of ecclesiastical works too, although these were far from the Ecclesiologists' ideal Gothic Revival design that he apparently hoped to bring to America. Two hitherto unremarked works are of much less importance than, for example, his chapel for Williams College, but they nonetheless help flesh out his career. In 1854 he designed a 500-seat Byzantine style building for the Church of the Redeemer on Pacific Street and Fourth Avenue in Brooklyn. This was intended as a temporary accommodation for a quickly expanding congregation. It was abandoned when Patrick C. Keeley in the 1860s produced a Gothic Revival church (now extant but abandoned).¹⁶ According to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, the style of Wheeler's building was "different from any other building in the city."¹⁷ Nearly four years later the notice of the laying of the cornerstone of the Trinity Chapel in Far Rockaway, Queens, named Wheeler as architect.¹⁸ As if to echo the accounts of the previously mentioned trials between Wheeler and Richard Upjohn, the National Register of Historic Places attributes the design of this building to Upjohn.

Back in England, in 1868, Wheeler read two papers before a meeting of the R.I.B.A. concerning "The Peculiarities of Domestic Architecture in America." Before presenting his thesis that any American national style would be the outgrowth of domestic architecture, he explained "that there is nothing in public buildings there to show the dawn of a new development." He did, however, mention one example of public building: Trinity Church in New York City, which he

declared "as good as revivals of our own of about thirty or forty years ago—better, indeed, in many respects than most of them."¹⁹ The architect of Trinity Church was none other than Richard Upjohn.

However brief a career Wheeler had in this country, through his publications and scattered buildings he made for himself a significant place in our architectural history. Continued research will help us to define that place more precisely.



Notes

1. Renée E. Tribert and James F. O'Gorman, *Gervase Wheeler: A British Architect in America, 1847-1860*, Middletown, Conn. Wesleyan University Press, 2012.
2. Wheeler to the Building Committee, 1 October 1847, Bowdoin College Library, George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections and Archives, Chapel Papers.
3. Upjohn to Woods, 15 July 1851, Bowdoin College Library, George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections and Archives, Chapel Papers.
4. Finding Number: EK/U1453/P130. It remains to be seen if the house were ever built.
5. *New York Tribune*, 14 March 1854. Wheeler published designs for such ancillary structures.
6. Gervase Wheeler, *Homes for the People*, 177-80; Tribert and O'Gorman, figs. 29-30.
7. *New York Evening Post*, 26 January 1855 and later. (This and the following newspaper articles may be accessed through fultonhistory.com).
8. *New York Evening Post*, March 1855.
9. Tribert and O'Gorman, 81-82.
10. Tribert and O'Gorman, 24-28 and 37-38. In *Homes for the People*, Wheeler published his design for a rustic villa he said had been erected in Orange, New Jersey. In *The Choice of a Dwelling*, published after his return to England, Wheeler illustrated and discussed a villa in Montrose, New Jersey, designed by Charles Duggin. Members of Wheeler's extended family immigrated to Essex County, New Jersey, in the 1860s, after he had returned home.
11. We owe this observation to Walter Langsam. In Turner's book the Bartlett house is named for a later owner, William H. Aspinwall.
12. Notices in the *Utica Morning Herald*, October 1855.
13. Compare this to the wishful title of a lecture given in Boston ninety years later by Charles D. Maginnis entitled "Have we Done with the Past?" The past as prologue became in the next century the past as wasteland.
14. *Rome Daily Sentinel*, 18 Oct 1855.
15. See Ms. Barber's account: www.oldfirstbrooklyn.org/pages_mission/ourgifts_architecture.html.
16. Thanks to Suzanne Lipkin of the Brooklyn Historical Society. It seems that no images of Wheeler's building survive.
17. 11 January 1855.
18. *Queens County Sentinel*, 4 November 1858. The architectural history of this site is confusing. See Alfred H. Bellot, *History of the Rockaways*, Far Rockaway: Bellot's Histories, Inc., 1917. Called St. John's after 1882 (not to be confused with Trinity Chapel, Hewlett). Consecrated November 1860.
19. Royal Institute of British Architects, Ordinary General Meeting, 3 February 1868.

The Bibliophile

A Sisterhood of Sculptors: American Artists in Nineteenth-Century Rome

Melissa Debakis. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2014.

Beyond Grief: Sculpture and Wonder in the Gilded Age Cemetery

Cynthia Mills. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2014.

In 2010, the journal *American Art* devoted much of its spring issue to sculpture. In her introductory commentary to that issue, the art historian Cynthia Miles stated succinctly and accurately, “Sculpture has always been the poor stepsister to painting in the study of American art.” Certainly, those of us who study American sculpture, write about it, or curate exhibitions of it already know this. If I may speak for the group, we tired long ago of the hackneyed comment that “sculpture is the thing that you bump into while stepping back to get a better view of a painting.”

Here to help set the record straight (one hopes) and further the cause are two new books, both excellent, about nineteenth-century American sculpture. In a happy publishing coincidence, these books fit together nicely, with Melissa Debakis concentrating on artists, issues, and objects from the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century and Cynthia Mills (who is quoted above) dealing with others dating mostly from the last quarter of the century.

Debakis, a professor of art history at Kenyon College, dedicates much of her book to the group of American women sculptors that coalesced in Rome beginning in the 1850s around the famous actress Charlotte Cushman. The group included Harriet Hosmer, Margaret Foley, Louisa Lander, Edmonia Lewis, and Emma Stebbins (who was Cushman’s partner). These were the artists who were disparaged by Henry James as “the white marmorean flock,” a veiled slur that Debakis dissects for its inherent sexism and the manner in which it dehumanizes this quite diverse group of artists.

In one of the most enlightening sections of her book, Debakis does these artists further service by placing them into the various political and professional milieux in which they moved. This included the nineteenth-century feminist movement that was centered in New England and which touched the lives of most of the artists discussed here; the tumultuous world of Italian politics as it existed at mid-century when so many Americans had expatriated to Rome or Florence; and the complicated context of gender and sexual roles that professional women had to negotiate throughout the century, whether they stayed in America or not. In this regard, Debakis gives the reader a sense of the friction that must have existed between these women sculptors and their male counterparts, especially those who may already have been insecure (such as John Rogers and Joseph Mozier) or had achieved a status that must have seemed sacrosanct (e.g., William Wetmore Story). These, too, were the personalities behind scandals that erupted, at different times, over the unfair accusations of lack of originality in Hosmer’s and Lander’s sculpture and how the artists dealt with them. (Spoiler alert: Hosmer was better at it than was Lander.) Two other fascinating topics are addressed in Debakis’s book: the different ways that tourists behaved when visiting the studios of male artists as opposed to those of female artists; and the manner in which these women artists handled the nude figure, both female and male. In these areas, as in others, Debakis makes a real contribution to the literature.

It should be said too that this book is beautifully designed and

generously illustrated. Indeed, the Penn State University Press, which, to my mind, consistently offers one of the best annual lists of art-historical publications, American and otherwise, deserves a special shout-out of praise and gratitude.

Of course, Debakis’s subject is a large one and each of the sculptors she mentions deserves, and in some cases has received, a full-length study. Cynthia Mills, who was historian emeritus at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, tackles an equally daunting topic: the human need to embody grief in objects and the ways in which late-nineteenth-century American patrons and artists addressed that need. As Mills explains, for her subjects, the “tombstone or monument placed above the grave provided something concrete and specific for the senses to perceive, a visual and tactile trace that could be physically encountered and even touched—that was not a phantom spirit.”

Mills handles her large topic—grief—by focusing on a group of key sculptural monuments and weaving them together with a highly readable and sometimes lyrical prose. Among the objects that she discusses are Augustus Saint-Gaudens’ “Adams Memorial” in Washington, D.C.; Daniel Chester French’s “Milmore Memorial” in Forest Hills, Massachusetts; William Wetmore Story’s “Angel of Grief” in Rome; and Frank Duveneck’s “Elizabeth Boott Duveneck Memorial” in Florence. These are not discussed sequentially but instead are brought forward at various and multiple moments throughout the text to help make and illustrate specific points. Among these are Gilded-Age notions of the continuance of the soul, the role of figuration and text in funerary monuments, the landscape aesthetics of burial sites, and, of particular interest, the sometimes problematic relationship between the patron and the artist and the issue of aesthetic control.

This method of discussion, in which objects and people appear, disappear, and then reappear in the text, might cause some confusion for readers who are less familiar with the people and places under discussion; and for all of us, I think, more and better illustrations would have been welcomed. But these are quibbles and I, for one, came away from this book feeling that the author had somehow managed to impart not only the salient facts about these people and objects, but also at least a part of the spiritual aspects of her topic.

Or maybe that is simply part of knowing the sad fact, revealed on the back flap of the book jacket, that this much-admired scholar and educator died while this book was in production. The tragic irony of that is too obvious to require elaboration. Instead, in tribute, I leave the final words of this review to Cynthia Mills herself. She writes that for the people who commissioned and created the great, commemorative works of art “There was a dream of a death that was not terrifying and grim for their lost one but that was transformational, performed with a mystic experience, a profound sense of beauty, love, and understanding, and a connection with the larger universe in some form, somewhere, somehow.”

Reviewed by David B. Dearing

Cincinnati Silver: 1788-1940

Amy Miller Dehan, with contributions by Janet C. Haartz and Nora Kohl.
Cincinnati Art Museum in association with D. Giles Limited, 2014.

Published to accompany an exhibition of the same title on view at the Cincinnati Art Museum from June 14 to September 7, 2014, Amy Miller Dehan's book *Cincinnati Silver: 1788-1940* is a handsomely produced and abundantly illustrated 416-page study of the silver industry in the Queen City. It illuminates Cincinnati's place in, and contribution to, the rising American manufacture of silver through two relatively brief essays: "Establishment and Growth 1788-1865" and "Adjustment, Heyday, and Decline 1865-1940." It also includes two sections of biographies, divided into those silversmiths and firms for whom extant, marked silver is known, and those without known wares (Appendix A). Entries in both sections are arranged alphabetically. A second appendix lists all Cincinnati silver in the permanent collection of the Cincinnati Art Museum at the time of publication.

Dehan's time frame, 1788 to 1940, spans the period from Cincinnati's founding to the death of Kenton C. Kunkle (1861-1941), "the last known individual enumerated as a silversmith in Cincinnati city directories." City directory listings provide basic information for the study, supplemented by extant marked silver, newspapers, trade journals, diaries, inventories, invoices, Federal non-population census schedules, R. G. Dun & Co. credit reports and other primary and secondary sources. Dehan and her colleagues skillfully utilize the array of genealogical and object resources available on-line through Ancestry.com and similar genealogical sites as well as eBay listings. Many of these sources were not available in 1975 when Elizabeth D. Beckman wrote the only previous major scholarship on the subject: *An In-depth Study of the Cincinnati Silversmiths, Jewelers, Watch and Clockmakers Through 1850 Also Listing the More Prominent Men in These Trades from 1851 until 1900*. In updating Beckman's work, the authors focus on individuals and firms "expressly involved in the silver industry" rather than those in related crafts such as clock- and watchmaking, jewelry manufacture, and retail sales of such goods. They also try to adjudicate questions of authorship where sufficient data is present, distinguishing stamps of retailers from those of makers, as with spoons stamped by watchmaker and jeweler Garret T. Dorland, which "based on their shape, were made locally, but surely not by Dorland."

The spoons in question, with tipped, exaggerated fiddle handles and pointed shoulders (a design described by Louise C. Belden in her 1980 *Marks of American Silversmiths in the Ineson-Bissell*

Collection as "upturned double-swell fiddle handle with short front midrib, chamfered pointed shoulders"), are of a shape "distinctly identifiable with Cincinnati" and produced in the city from around 1840 into the 1890s. Such spoons were among the many products of brothers Edward and David Kinsey and successor firms, working 1836-1882, as they moved from traditional workshop production to a modernized "Steam Silverware Manufactory," first advertised in 1864.

According to Dehan, the "largest, most productive and successful firm in the history of Cincinnati's silver industry" was Duhme & Co., "a serious competitor of the Eastern firms of Tiffany & Co., Gorham Mfg. Co., Whiting Mfg. Co., and others" in the latter nineteenth century. Given the importance of the Duhme firm in the story of Cincinnati silver, it is not surprising that its entry, with copious illustrations, is 50 pages in length. Likewise the dust jacket cover illustration is a detail of the wading bird finial from a monumental tureen designed and manufactured by the firm for the Cincinnati Exposition of 1872. In April 1893, Duhme & Co. became The Duhme Company. The new firm, apparently a victim of the Panic of 1893, dropped plans to exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and is not known to have manufactured any silver subsequently.

By extending the study beyond the demise of Duhme & Co., which marked the end of large-scale silver manufacturing in Cincinnati, Dehan discovered a notable group of wares hand-wrought in sterling between 1890 and 1932 by Cincinnati native Robert Sturm that she notes "are comparable to the finest work of The Kalo Shop (Chicago, 1900-1970), The Dodge Silver Shop (Asheville, North Carolina, 1927-1942), and other well-recognized Arts and Crafts silver shops active at that time."

Cincinnati Silver: 1788-1940 should be on the reference shelves of American silver scholars, dealers, and collectors for its biographies and representations of marks. It will also complement the libraries of those interested in Victorian American material culture and business history for its detailed analyses of the perils of engaging in the precious metals trades. The artful photographs by Rob Deslongchamps, head of photographic services, Cincinnati Art Museum, give this scholarly work the appeal of a coffee-table book.

Reviewed by Deborah Dependahl Waters

Victoria: A Life

A. N. Wilson. New York: Penguin Press, 2014

Are empresses easier to love than emperors? It seems so in the case of Queen Victoria. Her less than salubrious Hanoverian uncles paved the way for a young fresh queen, full of the joy of life and a deep desire "to be good." In the eyes of the world she succeeded wonderfully.

As drawn by A. N. Wilson, *Victoria: A Life* is rich in both personal and political research. The various political movements of the day are clearly drawn. The Chartist Movement, which sought to defuse the monarchy, and the Reform Act of 1867, which enfranchised one million working-class voters, rocked the kingdom but Victoria withstood it all. Although her husband, Prince Albert, had persuaded her to a more progressive approach to her people, Victoria was at heart an unadulterated autocrat. Furthermore, she was not

concerned with her public image. She was Queen-Empress and that was that. Fortunately, the moderating voices of her Prime Ministers often saved her from deep waters.

Wilson provides well-researched detail on the varying political atmospheres of Victoria's reign, from her first Prime Minister, Melbourne, to her last Prime Minister, Salisbury. Despite the shifting sands of politics Victoria stands solidly. The swirl of politics often coincides with the swirl of Victoria's moods. From the young romantic girl who loved to dance to the passionate wife, to the deeply despondent young widow, we get a full blown view of the many Victorias.

Often-told myths about the Empress are gently but clearly refuted here and Wilson points out that many of these myths were

perpetrated by Victoria herself. The John Conroy story is clarified in a balanced and fair way. Conroy was obsessed with the notion that his wife was the illegitimate daughter of Edward, Duke of Kent therefore half sister to Victoria. Convinced that his wife was of royal blood and he himself acting as equerry to the Duke, Conroy considered himself “special.” Already with his ambitious foot in the door, when the Duke died leaving a bereft Duchess and their daughter Victoria floundering, Conroy stepped in and took over the household. The Duchess was delighted; her daughter was not.

Usually painted as a cruel and black-hearted schemer, Wilson gives us another view. Conroy had to deal with Victoria’s mother, a woman often lacking in common sense and financial restraint. Moreover, Victoria herself was no easy task as she was both emotionally and intellectually immature. It was Conroy who developed the idea of having Victoria travel around England staying at various country houses so that she could meet and greet her future subjects. This tactic endeared Victoria to her people even before she became queen.

The other myth Wilson dispels is that Victoria and her mother were estranged, because her mother had been cruel and unfeeling towards her during childhood. Described as “kind, sentimental and needy,” the Duchess was ever-present in Victoria’s life in childhood

and adulthood. Correspondence between the two demonstrates this. References to convivial luncheons and dinners abound. If any neglect occurred, it was Victoria neglecting her mother for Prince Albert. So emotionally involved was she with her husband, Victoria had virtually no time for anyone else. The sad truth was that Victoria neglected her mother for over 20 years, putting all her emotional energy into her marriage to Albert. Only after the death of the Duchess did Victoria acknowledge regretfully the error of her ways.

Victoria’s relationships with her Prime Ministers were fraught with emotion and moods. She was a little in love with her first Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne. Lord Palmerston let the Queen know unequivocally that he was in charge; this was not well-received. Later she deemed him “moderate and fair.” Lord Salisbury, her last Prime Minister, put up with her opinions, expressed with vehemence. Victoria just did not comprehend the idea of a constitutional monarchy. She was Queen-Empress – period.

This book is a wonderful combination of politics and personalities. Queen Victoria is drawn incisively. Anyone wishing to study Victoria and her political era will surely enjoy this work by A. N. Wilson.

Reviewed by Anne-Taylor Cahill

New and Noteworthy

The American West in Bronze, 1850-1925

Thayer Tolles and Thomas Brent Smith, with contributions by Carol Clark, Brian W. Dippie, Peter H. Hassrick, Karen Lemmey and Jessica Murphy. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014.

This is a catalog of an exhibition of over sixty bronze sculptures organized jointly by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Denver Art Museum. These pieces, which exist in many versions and casts, are much beloved by collectors and have become symbols of the Old West. We have prime examples by major artists (Alexander Phimister Proctor, Frederic Remington, Charles M. Russell, John Quincy Adams Ward) and a few surprises, such as *Indian Hunter and his Dog* by Paul Manship, with a definite modernist leaning. The photography is superlative, and shows the craftsmanship that went into the casting of these works. The catalog expands the story told in the exhibition by including paintings, photography, maps, coins and more. There are artist’s biographies and a chronology. The five essays explore various aspects of the myth of the American West. The sculpture was created as the strong pioneers, noble Indians, rugged cowboys, and solemn buffalo were vanishing in the sunset. The authors describe and analyze the artwork and the mythology, but rarely criticize the artistic intent. This is not a reprise of the exhibition *The West as America*, which angered so many with its revisionist view of history. Instead, we can understand and enjoy the sculpture for what it is; a nostalgic view of the West, expertly executed in bronze.

Arts & Crafts Architecture: History and Heritage in New England

Maureen Meister. University Press of New England, 2014.

This erudite volume explores Arts and Crafts architecture as practiced in New England by focusing on the work of twelve architects who were leaders in the Boston-based Society of Arts and Crafts. We learn that although the movement grew out of the theories and works of British advocates, New England locals such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Eliot Norton and Louis Dembitz Brandeis were important theorists and patrons. Meister reconstructs the careers of her twelve: Robert Day Andrews, George Edward Burton, Ralph Adams Cram, Lois Lilley Howe, Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow Jr., Charles Donagh Maginnis, Louis Chapell Newhall, William Edward Putnam Jr., George Russell Shaw, Richard Clipston Sturgis, Charles Howard Walker, Herbert Langford Warren. In their work, Arts and Crafts ideals were expressed within the framework of the Colonial Revival and Gothic Revival idioms. Their work also included a sensitive approach to the restoration of the region’s Colonial and Federal structures. While architecture is the main topic, Meister also explores the intertwined networks of familial relations, friendships and business associations that resulted in patronage and influence. In this volume, we learn that the Arts and Crafts architecture in New England was as much a set of shared ideas as a monolithic style.

Before the Movies: American Magic-Lantern Entertainment and the Nation’s First Great Screen Artist, Joseph Boggs Beale

Terry and Deborah Borton. John Libbey Publishing Ltd., 2015.

This book is a labor of love by Terry and Deborah Borton, who are the force behind the American Magic-Lantern Theatre, which recreates this popular entertainment form. In a magic-lantern show, a set of slides, which might consist of as many as 20 images, would be projected as a narrator (or narrators) played one (or more) roles, all this often to the accompaniment of music. Because various effects, such as slow motion, panning, and fade-outs could be achieved while projecting the slides, the Bortons claim that the magic-lantern performance was the progenitor of modern cinema, and Beale was a master cinematographer. While further scholarship may be necessary to substantiate this claim, this book

provides ample evidence of Beale's ability to tell a story through images. The Bortons have created a virtual shrine to Joseph Boggs Beale in their home in East Hamden, Connecticut. Beale created hundreds of sets of magic-lantern slides, mainly for the C. W. Briggs Company. His slides illustrate stories drawn from literature, history, poetry and the *Bible*. The bulk of this book is a catalog raisonné of Beale's work. They list 256 sets of slides, and at least one image from each set is illustrated here—in vivid color! The catalog is rounded out by essays on the genesis of the magic-lantern; on other publishers and artists who produced slides; and on the artistry of a magic-lantern performance. Footnotes, a bibliography and six other appendices offer such minutia as a list of companies distributing Beale's slides. Though this is designed as a book for collectors of magic-lantern slides, it provides wonderful insight into popular entertainment in the late Victorian era, the development of cinema, and Beale's particular method of visualizing topics as diverse as Paul Revere's ride, the eruption of a volcano in Martinique, and the creation of the earth as told in Genesis. The Bortons estimate that at least a million Americans saw a magic-lantern show in the 1890s. Here we get a glimpse of what they saw.

Navigating the West:


George Caleb Bingham and the River

Netette Luarca-Shoaf, Claire Barry, Nancy Heugh, Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser, Dorothy Mahon, Andrew J. Walker, and Janeen Turk, with contributions by Margaret C. Conrads, Brent R. Benjamin, and Andrew J. Walker. Yale University Press. 2014.

This is the catalog to an exhibition that opened at the Amon Carter Museum, with stops at the Saint Louis Art Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The opening essay, by Luarca-Shoaf, asserts that Bingham's artistic identity was fluid, like the Missouri river, by his own design. She traces his career as a painter, always learning, always tied to the river. He was "self-taught," yet knowledgeable about major art monuments. He painted people tied to the rough frontier trades, yet portrayed them as archetypical heroes. Of note are two essays written jointly by curators and conservators. New infra-red technologies are revealing Bingham's drawing methods and careful preparation, which provide a font of information for art historians. The Kornhauser/Mahon essay on "Fur Traders Descending the Missouri" documents Bingham's training, which stretches our notions of self-taught. Bingham was encouraged as an artist by his parents and study of their art books. After his mother was widowed, she opened a girls' school and hired an art teacher. Bingham became her star pupil. As a boy, Bingham watched the portraitist Chester Harding paint. In 1838, at the age of 27, Bingham studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and in 1857 he got instruction in Dusseldorf. Thus, this frontiersman could produce paintings that held their own in academic art venues. The Walker/Turk essay recounts the "discovery" of Bingham's drawing portfolios that had been held in Missouri museums since 1868 and the subsequent revival of his reputation in the twentieth century. All this, plus excellent illustrations and the expected scholarly apparatus make this a landmark publication on Bingham.

Reviewed by Karen Zukowski

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Milestones

The Bonfire Ballerina

ANNE-TAYLOR CAHILL

In the mid nineteenth century, fire was an ever-present fear for everyone connected with the theater, especially ballerinas in their long floating skirts. Gaslight (also known as limelight) had been recently introduced, much to the delight of choreographers. The creators of French Romantic ballets loved its magical and mysterious flickering stage shadows. Now the house lights could be dimmed for even more dramatic spectacles. But despite its marvelous beauty, it was also deadly; scores of ballet dancers met disfigurement or death by fire. In 1868 even the British medical journal *Lancet* drew attention to problem of “a holocaust of ballet girls.”

The most dramatic and tragic tale is that of Emma Livry (1842–1863), a French ballerina. Although not a great beauty, she was renowned for her stupendous ethereal balletic elegance and grace. She was a Parisian student of the prima ballerina Marie Taglioni, who was so impressed with Emma that she created a ballet just for her. *Le Papillon* (*The Butterfly*) was the story of a young girl transformed into a beautiful insect whose wings are singed when she flies too near a burning torch and is nearly destroyed.

On November 26, 1860, dress rehearsal tickets for *Le Papillon* were a sellout; everyone wanted to see Emma (*une grace parfait*) in her unique ballet. Not only had Taglioni created the ballet just for her but Jacques Offenbach developed his only ballet score for this event as well. Emma’s fame was such that even bisque and bronze figurines of her were created as *Le Papillon*. Some of these can be seen in the Theatre Museum of London.

Preparing to make her grand entrance onstage, Emma, fluffing her butterfly skirt too near a gaslight, was enveloped in flames and burned horribly. Witnesses reported that her skirt went up like dry leaves. Crazy with pain and fear she ran screaming around the stage; running and running in circles she went. The cast and audience were transfixed with horror. Finally, a fireman ran in from the wings, tackled Emma, rolled her in a damp blanket, and managed to tamp down the flames. Most of her costume was fused with her skin.

Pitiful, charred and limp, Emma could not be moved. She lay at the theater cocooned in cotton wool for 36 hours before being gently transported to her home. There she was placed on her stomach with both arms outstretched for over two months; two nuns and three doctors attended her. Below her room, the street was strewn with straw to mute the sound of passing horses and carriages. She suffered piteously.

The Emperor Louis Napoleon and the Empress Eugenie offered her their country home for recuperation. After three years, finally able to sit up and travel, and with the aid of



(L to R): Emma Livry. Figurine of Emma Livry in *Le Papillon* by sculptor Jean-Auguste Barre, Paris, 1861. Courtesy Victoria & Albert Museum, London. (Below): Illustration depicting the tragedy, 1860.



medical personnel, Emma began the slow and painful journey to Compiègne. As she traveled, crowds came out to greet her, but she never reached her destination. Suffering from convulsions, Emma knew she could not continue on. Her entourage stopped at Neuilly-sur-Seine. On the evening of July 26, 1863, Emma Livry passed away.

A French journalist covering the funeral reported that he saw two white butterflies hovering over Emma’s coffin. The all-white funeral procession moved slowly and sadly from Notre Dame de Lorette to Montmartre Cemetery. This was the end of an era; the French

Romantic Ballet was never the same again.

An anonymous Victorian poem says it all:

There are perils dire
Which oft beset the ballet girl
And the worst of these is fire!



For further reading:

Ivor Guest, *The Ballet of the Second Empire* (1955).
Ivor Guest, *The Ballet Annual & Year Book* (1963).
Deidre Kelly, *Ballerina* (2012).
Roger Williams, *Gaslight and Shadow* (1957).

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Submissions should be from 2,000 to 6,000 words in length, with illustrations and end notes as necessary. Submissions should be in a Microsoft Word document. Illustrations should be formatted as .jpg, .tiff, .eps or .pdf, 300 dpi or greater and submitted by **January 1** for publication in the Spring issue, and **July 1** for publication in the Fall issue. Manuscripts shall conform to the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. It shall be the responsibility of the author to secure the rights to publish all images. The Victorian Society in America and the editors assume no responsibility for the loss or damage of any material.

Email submissions to: William Ayres, Editor
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FALL STUDY TOUR

For a century clean-burning anthracite coal of northeastern Pennsylvania was America's fuel of choice, and its profits created some of the richest towns of the era. We will visit three of them that vividly tell this story.

OCTOBER
16-18, 2015

JIM THORPE
WILKES-BARRE
SCRANTON, PA



Jim Thorpe (originally Mauch Chunk) is the gorgeously sited mountain town where a pioneering gravity railroad first carried coal across the Pocono mountains to the Delaware River. Wilkes-Barre on the Susquehanna River was the center of anthracite industry but maintained much of the New England character established by original Connecticut settlers. And Scranton, the home of the powerful DL&W (Delaware Lackawanna & Western), would become its great railroad hub – now preserved as Steamtown National Historic Site.

We will stay in Scranton in the handsome Beaux-Arts station of the DL&W, designed by Kenneth Murchison (1906) and now a hotel. After visiting Steamtown and (for those brave enough) descending an actual coal mine, we will explore the eclectic architecture of Scranton which often drew its architects from New York. These include Richard Upjohn and Raymond Hood,

who designed Scranton's curious Gothic Art Deco Masonic Temple. In contrast to Scranton's industrial character, Wilkes-Barre is distinguished by its rich riverfront houses and churches, designed by such leading architects as James Renwick, Vaux & Withers, J. C. Cady, Wilson Eyre, C. P. H. Gilbert and Edward Kendall. It boasts one of the first buildings by Frank Furness, the last by Daniel Burnham, and a whole treasure trove of work by the extraordinary Bruce Price (creator of Tuxedo Park and father of Emily Post), who began practice in Wilkes-Barre and is buried here. Following this hyper-industrial meal comes the pastoral digestif: Jim Thorpe, in the midst of "the Switzerland of America." While touring the town we will also be visiting two of America's most exquisitely preserved Victorian buildings, the Asa Packer Mansion (1860), with its original furnishings largely intact, and the astonishing St. Mark's Episcopal Church (1867), dramatically leaping from its hillside site.

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