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John Rogers, *Mrs. John Rogers, Sr.*
(1805 - 1877), 1874. Painted plaster.
The New-York Historical Society.

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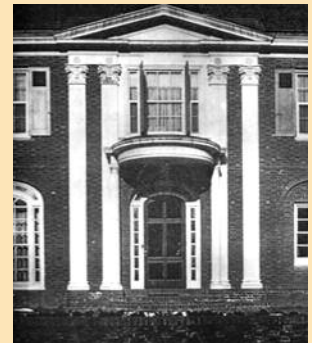
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The Royal Family in 1846 by Franz Xaver Winterhalter.

Queen Victoria as Artist, Art Collector and Patron

BARBARA FINNEY

Young Princess Victoria, heir to the British throne, grew up in London's Kensington Palace under the close scrutiny of her widowed mother the Duchess of Kent and her German governess Louise Lehzen. Inside the money-strapped palace there was little to resemble the ideal Victorian family. Without a father, brothers or sisters, and only rare playmates and pets and dolls for company, the queen later described a childhood with "no scope" for her very strong feelings of affection and "led a very unhappy life."

At age four, Princess Victoria started learning the alphabet by identifying letters on colored cards and by nine had read *Introduction to Astronomy, Geography and the Use of Globes* and at sixteen the works of Ovid, Virgil and Horace, as well as the poetry of Dryden and Shakespeare. The closely regulated schedule and frugal lifestyle maintained at Kensington Palace led the young princess to eagerly anticipate her daily pony rides and twice-weekly drawing lessons with the watercolor artist and Royal Academician Richard Westall (1765-1836). She began by copying Westall's drawings of horses, hands and eyes, and was taught to observe closely and to record gestures, showing a special aptitude for capturing momentary actions. She then progressed to watercolor painting, mixing and blending colors, and the use of crayons and pastels. By her early teens, watercolors in the Royal Collection show Victoria as an enthusiastic opera, ballet and theatre devotee.

The future queen was also a compulsive sketcher; rarely seen without her sketchbook, even on walks and pony rides; up to the last decade of her life she was likely to order her carriage to halt in order to sketch an appealing scene. But she was probably unaware of playing a leading role in the sketching craze then gripping amateur artists throughout mid-nineteenth century England.

Having ascended to the throne in 1837, Victoria's future changed radically with her marriage to Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1840. She would soon have new and enticing sketching opportunities: vistas on travels through England, France and Germany, the Isle of

Wight and the Scottish Highlands and, eventually, the frolics of her growing family. In 1846, she received twelve lessons in landscape painting from poet-artist Edward Lear (1812-1888) and for twenty years was regularly coached in draftsmanship and watercolor painting by the Scottish artist William Leighton Leitch (1803-1888). Artists were occasional guests at Osborne House and



This watercolor by Princess Victoria of Marie Taglioni was executed in 1836 at the height of the future queen's interest in ballet.

Barmoral Castle, and through the years the queen enjoyed friendly relationships with many. But privately, some who saw her art noted that the concept of perspective had escaped her and that she failed to understand the use of the vanishing point. Her chief talent seemed to lie in the subtle use of washes and an ability to capture gestures.

Victoria also tried oil painting but the experiment was short-lived. The technique was often shunned by “lady-like” artists concerned with the delicacy of their hands or who disliked the odor of turpentine. But during the early months of 1852 the queen, between royal duties, worked diligently on an oil painting entitled: *A Scene from Der Hahnenschlag*, advised by Franz Xaver Winterhalter (1805-1873), the court’s favorite portrait painter. Several years later, writing to her eldest daughter “Vicky,” by then the Crown Princess of Prussia, she made her opinion of amateurs who painted in oils very clear:

I hear you model and even paint in oils; this last I am sorry for; you remember what Papa always told you on the subject. Amateurs never can paint in oils like artists and what can one do with all one’s productions? Whereas watercolours always are nice and pleasant to keep in books or portfolios. I hope dear, you will not take to the one and neglect the other!

Later, the queen admitted to Vicky: “Painting in oils, for a little while, certainly does help ones painting in watercolours – and with that object you are quite right to do so; only don’t let it exclude the other.” The queen had no objection to etching, considered a lady-like pastime despite its difficult techniques and the use of sharp tools. Early in marriage the royal couple began learning the process, instructed by the court’s favorite animal painter Edwin Landseer (1802-1873).

Based on a letter to Vicky from the queen dated 1858, the question should be asked if the queen was serious about her artistic pursuits.

I hope you will draw a little whenever you can, she wrote. Papa and I used formerly always to draw of an evening when we were read to – and you should do the same; it is much better than working...

At age eight Victoria, encouraged by her mother, began a small art collection. At the time, nothing indicated her modest undertaking would eventually grow into one of the largest accumulations of artworks assembled by English royalty since the idea of collecting first occurred to ancestors centuries earlier, subsequently becoming a royal prerogative. One of the young princess’s earliest acquisitions was *View of the Coastal City Ischia*, a gift from her German uncle Leopold, future King of the Belgians. Next came *The Wild Huntsman* by her drawing master Westall, followed by a painting of the sailboat *Emerald* from her mother, commemorating sailing days off the Isle of Wight.

By her accession in 1837, Victoria’s zeal for collecting had gathered momentum. Portraits in particular – including miniatures of her German relatives, most of whom she had never met – held special appeal. Later, there would be commanding full-size regal portraits of the



Queen Victoria painted this watercolor of Coburg in Germany, looking down from a window during one of her visits with the Prince.

queen and her growing family, many from the brush of Winterhalter, whose output was said to exceed that of any other painter in the history of royal patronage. At age fourteen, Victoria began attending major art exhibitions and as queen, prior to each year’s opening of the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition, she was guided by the director through the Academy’s exhibition rooms. Regular visits were also paid to the British Institution, the New and Old Associations of Painters in Watercolours, the Photographic Society and to studios of favored artists.

Two comprehensive studies provide an insight into Victoria’s role as a collector of paintings, watercolors, drawings and photographs. In his two-volume *Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, Oliver Millar (1923-2007), former Surveyor of the Queen’s Pictures and Director of Royal Collections, itemizes the paintings commissioned or purchased by the queen, or presented as gifts by foreign dignitaries, and also includes amateur works executed by members of the royal family. Selections range from English, Scottish and Italian landscapes to religious and genre subjects, chosen based on the conventional taste of Victoria and Prince Albert, not contemporary trends or museum potential. Among their varied choices were *The Gate of the Seraglio* by Francis Danby (1793-1861), *Eve of the Deluge* by John Martin (1789-1854), and *Liberation of Slaves* by Henry Le Jeunes (1806-1864). For years the queen awarded

generous commissions to Edward Landseer for his portraits of her beloved animals, resulting in images of at least seventy dogs, forty-one horses and ponies, cattle, lambs, a leopard, lioness, owl, parrot and other birds. In 1839, after attending six gripping London performances by the famous American animal trainer Isaac Van Amburgh (1811-1865), the enthralled queen commissioned Landseer to portray the trainer's menagerie of caged lions, tigers, leopards and lambs.

Perhaps surprising in a period noted for prudery, both Victoria and Albert greatly appreciated portrayals of the nude body, both male and female, as examples from their collection show. In 1851, the queen's eye was caught by a cast of the neoclassic mythological figure of a nude Andromeda by sculptor John Bell (1811-1895). Purchased as a gift for the prince, it stands today in the Andromeda Fountain at Osborne House. Another purchase was Winterhalter's *Florinda*, with cavorting nude female figures, Victoria's present to the Prince in 1852.

A second two-volume companion work, *Drawings and Watercolours in the Collection of her Majesty the Queen* by Delia Millar, lists approximately 9,876 watercolors, photographs and drawings in pastel, chalk, crayon and other media. When combined with nearly two thousand oil paintings acquired during Victoria's reign – purchased or received as gifts – by the time the queen died in 1901, close to 12,000 new artworks appear to have been added to the country's growing artistic heritage.

The collection also contains examples of the queen and Prince Albert's artwork, along with contributions from the royal children. The Prince contributed his original oil paintings *Long-Eared Owl*, *The Death of the Marquis of Posá*, and *Death of Count Mansfield the Marquis*. From Victoria, Princess Royal – considered to have inherited the family's artistic genes – came *Cross and Flowers* and *Still Life with Flowers*. Among the relatively few paintings of America are the watercolors of George Henry Andrews (1816-1898), sent by the *Illustrated London News* to record the Prince of Wales's 1861 visit to Canada and the United States.

Prince Albert, a skilled organizer, managed the flow of drawings, watercolors and photographs accepted into the royal collection, first

sorting them into chronological categories, then assigning each to a specially bound "view" or souvenir album and placed in the Print Room at Windsor Castle. The queen's leather bound souvenir albums were precious to her, and she often carried them along on her travels. There was an "animal album," a "Rhine Album," an "Osborne House album" and a "Princess Royal" album" (containing drawings by eldest daughter Vicky). Filled with



The Prince's Dressing and Writing Room at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, by J. Roberts, 1851, showing walls hung in systematic order in accord with the Prince's orderly habits.



The Corridor, Windsor, by Joseph Nash, 1846.



Isaac van Amburgh and his Animals by Sir Edwin Landseer, 1839, was commissioned by the queen, who loved animals and visited the American animal trainer's London performances six times.

photographs and watercolors – some by amateurs who provided sketches when professionals were unavailable, albums were dedicated to journeys throughout England and abroad, Prince Albert's family estates, the castles of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, naval reviews, royal ceremonials, yachts, and scenes of Balmoral and the Isle of Wight. Images larger than album size found space on the walls of Osborne House and at Balmoral, where they covered the surfaces from floor to ceiling.

The royal couple's nine children, varying in artistic ability, were instructed by drawing master Edward Corbould (1815-1905), nicknamed "Cobby" by his pupils. The Prince of Wales and his three brothers were the least interested in art and the most gifted, Princess Louise, was later allowed to enroll in sculpture classes at the National Art Training School in Kensington and in 1881 Princess Beatrice successfully published *A Birthday Book Designed by her Royal Highness the Princess Beatrice*, illustrated with reproductions of wildflowers for each month of the year.

In 1855, with Courbould's assistance, the Princess Royal, Prince of Wales, Prince Alfred and Princesses Alice and Helena aided the Crimean War effort by donating drawings for auction at Ernest Gambart's gallery in Pall Mall, helping in a small way to raise money for the war's Patriotic Fund. After reviewing the royal submissions, the

Illustrated London News deemed the Princess Royal's semi-circular drawing, "Battlefield," selling for 250 guineas, the best of their offerings. As for the Prince of Wales's "Knight," the publication had little to say except that it possessed a "rather comic turn of look and leg."

The queen's domestic contentment would soon end. Following Prince Albert's sudden death in 1861, her zeal for collecting declined and she felt less competent in making choices without the Prince at her side. It was in deep mourning that she wrote:

... How [shall] I who leant on him for all and everything
 – without whom I did nothing, moved not a figure,
 arranged not a print or photograph...if he didn't approve
 it –...be able to go on?

Simultaneously, there was a lack of available wall space to accommodate new artwork. In 1877 Victoria became Empress of India and assigned what would be a final commission, dispatching the Viennese artist Rudolph Swobda (1859-1914) to India where he painted 831 portraits of Indian and Muslim leaders. These were later hung in the Indian Hall at Osborne House.

Throughout their years of collecting, the queen and prince consort had shown unwavering support for the fast-moving developments in photography, but turned a blind eye to new art movements, and showed no interest whatsoever in significant trends in British painting. The

flat surfaces and bright colors of the Pre-Raphaelites held no appeal; inevitably, the works of John Constable (1776-1837) and J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851) were neglected. Although she was said to appreciate light sketchy watercolors, the queen refused to consider impressionist painting worthy of collecting.

In 1891, after the prince had been dead for thirty years, Victoria agreed to lend selections from the royal collection to the Victorian Exhibition held at London's New Gallery. This may have been a mistake. For after evaluating the submissions, novelist-critic George Moore, among his other objections, pronounced the works indicative of the "German bourgeois family mind":

The Queen and the Prince Consort do not seem to have been indifferent to art, but to have deliberately, and with rare instinct, always picked out what was most worthless, and regarded in the light of documents, these pictures are valuable for they tell plainly the real mind of the Royal Family. We see that the family mind is wholly devoid of humour; the very faintest sense of humour would have saved them from exhibiting themselves in so ridiculous a light...

Continuing, he referred to a large portrait of the royal couple:

The large picture of the Queen and the Prince Consort in knee breeches, showing a finely-turned calf, is sufficient to occasion to overthrow of a dynasty if humour were the prerogative of the many instead of being that of the few...

But soon other assessments followed. Late in January, 1901 the queen died. In February that year London's *Magazine of Art* expressed its opinion in an article entitled "Her Late Majesty Queen Victoria and the Fine Arts":

everyone may marvel how in a busy life packed full of the toil of routine, punctuated with great incidents of momentous importance, of universal concern... Queen Victoria found time and heart to give so much thought and love to art. As a patroness not only was she a kindly and sympathetic chief of the Royal Academy, but no mean critic of a picture.

However, considering Victoria on her merits as an artist, the publication could only observe that "had she been able to develop her great natural gifts and early talent, with sufficient time...it would have placed her in the first rank of amateur artists." A more flattering appraisal was expressed by the landscape-marine painter Clarkson Stanfield (1793-1867). Noticing the work of a nameless artist in the studio of former royal drawing instructor William Leighton Leitch, oblivious that it was by the queen, he exclaimed: "She paints too well for an amateur and will soon be entering the ranks as a professional artist."

In truth, Queen Victoria in her wildest dreams never aimed to be a professional artist. She was content to remain an amateur who enjoyed chronicling daily life and the passing scene by means of pencil and watercolors. Nor did Victoria and Albert aspire to create a museum-quality art collection for future generations, but were primarily interested in decorating their homes with work that appealed to them personally.

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Elijah E. Myers, *Texas State Capitol Building*, south façade drawing. Courtesy of Texas State Preservation Board.

The 1888 Texas State Capitol

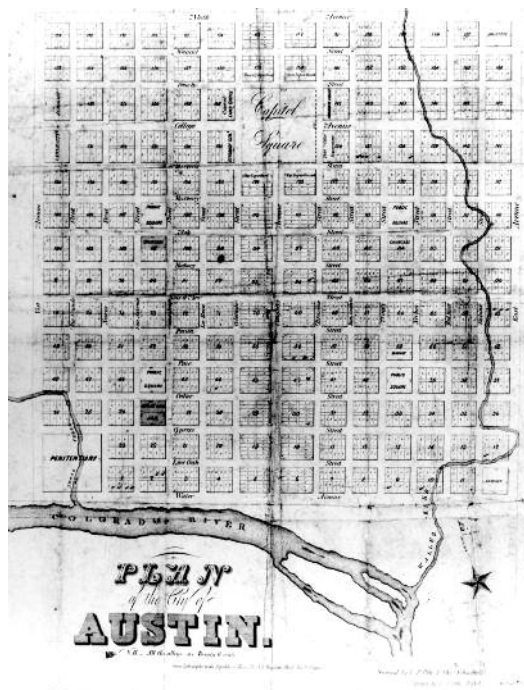
ALI JAMES

The vision of the 1888 Texas State Capitol, which watches over Austin from the highest spot in the city, was a grand one, truly bold and encompassing. An impressive example of late nineteenth century public architecture, the building was designed in the then-popular Renaissance Revival style, echoing the public structures of fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy, which themselves reflected the governmental buildings of ancient Greece and Rome. The Capitol's basic shape and its rotunda, columns and other classical architectural details are typical Renaissance Revival features, here executed with the finest craftsmanship. It may remind viewers of the United States Capitol – but it is 15 feet higher. (This is Texas!)

A full week of festivities including marching bands, military drills and fireworks were held in celebration of the completed structure in May 1888. Newspapers of the day estimated that more than 20,000 people crowded the Capitol grounds for the dedication ceremony. Governor Lawrence Sullivan Ross proudly welcomed visitors to the “mighty and beautiful structure” before introducing other state officials. Attorney and legislator Temple Houston, the youngest son of former governor Sam Houston, accepted the Lone Star statehouse on behalf of the people of Texas in a rousing speech:

The architecture of a civilization is its most enduring feature, and by this structure shall Texas transmit herself to posterity...Here glitters a structure that shall stand as a sentinel of eternity, to gaze upon passing ages.

For over a century, the sunset red granite Capitol has stood as a symbol of the legendary spirit of Texas. It is the seat of government – the place where legislators meet to enact laws for the state. But the statehouse story extends beyond this building's thick stone walls. In Austin alone, three other buildings served as capitols before this noble granite edifice was designed and built on Capitol Square. And other Texas towns served as capitals of Texas before Austin.



Austin site plan. Texas State Preservation Board.

Shifting Capitals

After Texas declared its independence from Mexico at Washington-on-the-Brazos on March 2, 1836, proclaiming itself the Republic of Texas, the capital of the newly formed nation moved numerous times. In some cases, it was to insure safety from the Mexican army; in others it was to accommodate the preferences of government officials.

By the end of March 1836, interim President David G. Burnet moved government headquarters to Harrisburg, Texas. In April, with Santa Anna's troops rapidly advancing, he retreated to Galveston Island. After General Sam Houston captured Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto, the government relocated to Velasco.

Sam Houston, elected on September 5, 1836, as the first president of the Republic of Texas, favored a capital located in a secure, populated region. A new town had been founded on the west bank of Buffalo Bayou and named Houston. The First Congress of the Republic selected this new settlement as the temporary capital until 1840.

Mirabeau Lamar, a proponent of western expansion, who was elected the second president of the Texas Republic in 1838, pushed for a capital nearer the frontier. In January 1839, the Congress of Texas passed legislation providing for the permanent selection of “a site for the location of the seat of government between the Trinity and Colorado rivers and above the old San Antonio road” and dictated “that the name of said site shall be the city of Austin,” in honor of the deceased “Father of Texas” Stephen F. Austin.

In April 1839, a commission appointed by the Third Texas Congress to select the new capital site reported its choice as the tiny settlement of Waterloo, renamed Austin, on the north bank of the Colorado River. President Lamar dispatched Edwin Waller to survey and plat the new town site. The Fourth Congress of the Republic was the first to convene in Austin that November.

Austin’s Four Capitols

Austin’s first capitol, designed to be temporary, was built around 1840 of Bastrop plank lumber on a hilltop west of Congress Avenue between the current Eighth and Ninth Streets. Journalist and soldier George W. Bonnell described it as “a large one story frame building, very commodious, [which] will answer all the purposes for which it was intended, until the government shall be able to erect a more elegant and costly building...”



Texas Republic Capitol, Austin. Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

In December of 1841, Sam Houston became President of the Republic for the second time. Shortly thereafter, Mexico invaded the Republic of Texas. Houston took the opportunity to order the capital moved from Austin to a safer site – first to Houston then to Washington-on-the-Brazos. Many citizens fled Austin and by 1843 its streets were described by British traveler William Bollaert as “filled with grass and weeds,” while the Capitol served as “the abode of bats, lizards and stray cattle...”

In 1845, the Capitol returned to Austin, and a new site, a 26-acre plot of choice high land, was christened Capitol Square and designated to be the permanent home of the capitol of Texas. This coincided with the annexation that year of Texas by the United States of America as its twenty-eighth state, and the new Texas constitution designated Austin as the site of the capital until 1850, “after which period the seat of government shall be permanently located by the people” – and in Austin it has remained.

In 1853, the first State Capitol was completed in the four-block Capitol Square. The three-story, Greek Revival limestone building measured 140 feet by 90 feet and cost approximately \$150,000 to construct. Controversy over the awarding of contracts, qualifications of the Commissioners and Superintendent and use of State funds accompanied its completion. Described by cavalryman H. H. McConnell as “without any pretensions to architectural beauty,” some Texans felt the building was never intended to be a lasting monument to the State of Texas because the election of 1850 named Austin the capital city for only twenty years.

A Permanent Home

Austin was named the state’s permanent capital in 1872, and the 1853 Capitol seemed increasingly outdated. On November 20, 1880, the two Capitol Building Commissioners announced a national design contest for a new Capitol in Austin. The winner’s fee was \$1,700. Eight architects, using such imaginative pseudonyms as *Pay as You Go*, *Woglosnop* and *Lone Star* submitted drawings for a total of eleven different designs. New York City architect Napoleon Le Brun selected the design submitted by *Tuebor* – that is, Detroit architect Elijah E. Myers, architect of many public buildings including the 1871 Michigan capitol and the future (1894) Colorado capitol. Born in 1832 in Philadelphia, Myers studied architecture and engineering at the city’s Franklin Institute.

The commissioners agreed with Le Brun’s choice of architect as well as his suggestions for a design changes including a round rather than square dome. Upon Myers’s arrival in Austin, the competition drawings and building specifications were revised to reflect these changes at no cost. Myers signed the agreement to produce the construction documents for the building for \$12,000 on May 17, 1881. Although he helped to stake out the site of the building early in 1882 and eventually produced the documents, he failed to continue to revise them to the liking of the commissioners. He spent much



Goddess of Liberty statue, 1888. Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

of the time at his architectural firm in Michigan, and his relationship with Texas officials deteriorated. Although he was never fired, his duties as architect of the building were essentially over by the end of 1886.

Meanwhile, tragedy struck about noon on the cold, rainy day of November 9, 1881, when the 1853 Greek Revival Capitol went up in flames. Although no one was killed, huge losses included thousands of books from the state library, several paintings of Texas heroes, and geological specimens. The Commissioners who were meeting in the limestone building about the new capitol managed to save the plans and escape with their lives.

Not everyone, however, was sorry to see the limestone capitol burn. A journalist from the independent weekly humor magazine *Texas Siftings* wrote,

The architectural monstrosity that has so long disfigured the crown of the heaven-kissing hill at the head of Congress Avenue, in Austin, is no more. The venerable edifice that bore such a startling resemblance to a large

size corn crib, with a pumpkin for a dome, and whose halls have so often resounded with legislative eloquence, reminding the distant hearer of a dog barking up a hollow log, is gone.

A temporary statehouse was built across the street from Capitol Square to house the government during construction of the new building. Designed by Frederick Ruffini and completed in early 1883, the simple Italianate structure survived until an 1899 fire.

Originally, the new building's exterior was to be limestone, but the stone streaked when exposed to the atmosphere. Harder but more expensive granite was proposed, and the debate delayed construction on the building for almost two years. The owners of Granite Mountain in Burnet County then offered to donate the granite. Contractors for the new granite Capitol were offered an interesting trade: three million acres of the Texas Panhandle in exchange for constructing a new statehouse. The state gave the stone to the contractor along with 1,000 convicts to quarry it. The exterior design



Texas State House Chamber. Texas State Preservation Board.



Texas State Senate Chamber. Texas State Preservation Board.

was simplified to accommodate the change to the harder stone. Then, in 1885, the granite cutter's union objected to the use of convict labor and boycotted the construction project. The contractor responded by importing experienced cutters from Scotland. The union claimed that this importation violated the new Alien Contract Labor Law, filed suit and later won one of the first cases tried to test this law.

The ground-breaking ceremony for the new capitol was held on February 1, 1882. Three years later, builders had finished the foundation and basement walls, and the 12,000-pound cornerstone was laid on March 2, 1885. Workers completed the second floor walls of the Capitol by the end of 1886. By mid-1887, the remaining walls were up, a copper roof was installed and the dome began to take shape. Probably inspired by the 1863 statue of Freedom on the dome of the United States Capitol, as well as by publicity about the Statue of Liberty under construction in New York harbor, architect E. E. Myers designed the Goddess of Liberty statue as the crowning element of the Texas Capitol and had included it on his early 1881 competition drawings for the building. Standing nearly 16 feet tall and weighing approximately 2,000 pounds, the statue probably represents Pallas Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom, justice, and arts and crafts.

John C. McFarland of Chicago, the subcontractor of the galvanized iron and zinc work on the Texas Capitol, probably furnished the Goddess of Liberty statue as a part of that contract. Two of McFarland's foremen, Albert Friedley and Herman F. Voshardt, seem to have guided the actual fabrication of the statue utilizing plaster molds supplied by an unidentified sculptor. The molds arrived in mid-January of 1888 by railroad, possibly from Chicago, and Friedley and Voshardt reputedly set up a foundry in the southeast basement corner of the unfinished Capitol. During late January and early

February 1888, the two men oversaw the casting of the zinc statue in eighty separate pieces that were welded together to form four major sections: the torso, the two arms, and the head. The statue probably received three coats of white paint and sand to simulate stone, but the original lone star held by the Goddess supposedly was gilded afterward. Workmen hoisted the four sections to the top of the Capitol dome and assembled the statue with large iron screws during the last week in February of 1888.

When the Capitol was finished and formally accepted by the end of the year, it measured over 566 feet by 288 feet and over 300 feet in height. It had 392 rooms, 924 windows, 404 doors and cost more than \$3.7 million to build. It took over 1,000 people seven years to build the it, including engineers, contractors, laborers and craftsmen. These came from many different backgrounds, for Texas in the 1880s was already a rich mixture of cultures.

Although the architectural work was essentially complete by the end of 1888, no furnishings had been specified or purchased for the building. In November 1888, a three-member Furnishing Board appointed by the Governor awarded a \$25,000 contract for the iron and steel furniture and a \$50,000 contract for wooden furniture to A. H. Andrews & Company of Chicago. At the time, Chicago was the country's leading furniture manufacturing center and Andrews was the city's largest commercial furniture provider. According to the contract, the company was to furnish the Senate and House Chambers by February of 1889, with the rest of the furniture arriving by April. To meet the deadline, Andrews subcontracted parts of the order to a least two other suppliers, J. S. Ford, Johnson and Company of Chicago, and the Milwaukee Chair Company. The December 8, 1888, *Austin Daily Statesman* noted,

They [the Furnishing Board] have displayed remarkable good taste in their selections and wisdom has guided them in fixing the price of the various articles. No extravagant prices have been paid, nor have flimsy materials been selected.... No better selections could have been made, and the capitol will be furnished in keeping with its style and the grandeur of the building.

A Century of Use

During the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Texas Capitol was the site of many activities and events, from the inaugurations of governors such as Miriam “Ma” Ferguson to visits by popular heroes such as Will Rogers to public rallies. The halls, chambers and rooms of the Capitol have served not just for government proceedings but as a place for visitors to realize a sense of the grand heritage of the state. Through the years, the building has resounded with symphonies for state affairs, bands for marching, fiddles for dancing and even a bit of two-stepping for Hollywood movies.

The growth of state government and new technologies led to ongoing alterations to the Capitol’s appearance. Many areas in the building with 20-foot ceilings were divided into two floors of offices, then partition walls were added to increase work space. The 1914 Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds noted,

I wish to impress home the fact that if the legislature continues to create new boards and new offices, that some provision must be made for housing the new officials.... At this time there are 20 committee rooms being occupied by 11 state departments...on account of a lack of other quarters.... It has become necessary to close the west end of the corridor on the ground floor in order to make working room for additional forces that have been quartered by law in the Capitol building.

The Capitol received its first major renovation around 1916 when the plumbing and wiring were updated. The bold and striking terrazzo tile on the first floor was installed in 1936, when Texans celebrated their centennial. The rotunda design includes a lone star and the seals of the six nations whose flags have flown over Texas.¹ The floor in the south foyer features the names of twelve battles fought on Texas soil. In the 1940s, apartments for the Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House were authorized, the roof was replaced, and a fire alarm system was installed. Acoustical ceilings, fluorescent lights and air conditioning were installed during the 1950s. By the 1960s, six state office buildings were constructed, which led to the relocation of many state agencies from the Capitol. The vacated space in the Capitol was reconfigured to allow for additional legislative staff offices. In the 1970s the Legislative Reference Library was updated with major structural changes to the building including the covering of the third floor atrium below the north skylight and removal of the glass-block floor. By the 1980s, the once-proud Capitol was a building at risk, as well as a building seriously compromised



Above: Interior and exterior of the Texas State Capitol. Texas State Preservation Board.

aesthetically. A century of haphazard modifications had created dangerous and overcrowded conditions.

The magnitude of the problem became apparent early one morning in February of 1983. A fire in the Capitol’s east wing killed one man, destroyed the Lieutenant Governor’s apartment, and caused heavy damage

throughout Senate areas of the building. The fire, traveling through the walls along the path of duct work hidden above the ceiling, made Texans realize how vulnerable their Capitol had become. Preserving the structure became a top priority.

Preserving a Legacy

In 1983 the legislature created the State Preservation Board to preserve, maintain and restore the Capitol, the General Land Office Building, and their contents and grounds. The Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, another division of the State Preservation Board, opened to the public in 2001. The preservation, maintenance and restoration of the Texas Governor's Mansion was assigned to the State Preservation Board in 2009. The six-member board is chaired by the governor with both the lieutenant governor and speaker of the house serving as vice-chairs.²

After a brief interim restoration of the Capitol's fire-damaged east wing, one of the board's first projects was to address the original Goddess of Liberty. The deteriorated zinc statue was removed from the dome and replaced with a more durable aluminum replica in 1986. Today the original Goddess of Liberty is housed at the nearby State History Museum.

In 1989, restoration work began on the 1858 General Land Office Building, the oldest surviving state office building. The highly formal symmetry and round-arched windows of Christoph Conrad Stremme's design relate to the German architectural movement known as *Rundbogenstil* (round-arched style). The crenellated parapets and the drip moldings over the windows relate more closely to the Norman style. This blending of the two styles unfortunately did not include the elaborate ornamentation Stremme planned. The era of 1885 to 1890 was chosen as the interpretive focus for the building; it appears as it did when the Capitol was completed in 1888. In 1994 the building opened as the Capitol Visitors Center. Today it features interactive exhibits, theaters, travel information and a gift shop.

To relieve the Capitol's overcrowded conditions, a 1989 master plan and historic structures report proposed adding a structure on the north side of the building, placing it underground so that remaining views would not be obscured. The excavation work occurred during 1990, beginning with archaeological studies and ending with the removal of 40,000 truckloads of earth and stone. The \$63

million Capitol Extension was completed in 1993. Designed to complement but not copy the Capitol's architecture, it has two levels containing offices for two-thirds of the state's representatives and nearly one-third of its senators, several committee and conference rooms, an auditorium, a cafeteria, a bookstore and two levels of parking. The Capitol and its extension are connected by pedestrian tunnels under the Capitol's north wing.

The \$10.2 million Exterior Restoration Project began in 1991, taking two years to complete. The metal dome was carefully stripped, restored and recoated with a protective paint. Many of the deteriorated sheet metal leaves on the columns surrounding the dome had to be reproduced, but original pieces that could be saved were restored and reattached. The leaky copper roof was repaired and the drainage system improved. The granite was cleaned and the mortar repaired. Windows and doors were removed for repair, abatement and refinishing. The lights outside the Capitol's four entrances and the oval walkway around the building were restored.

The House Chamber is the largest room in the building. Located on the second floor of the west wing, the House Chamber – like the Senate – is one of the few rooms still used for its original purpose. During legislative sessions, representatives convene in the room, the Speaker presiding from the podium. Restored to its circa 1910 appearance, the House Chamber includes some of

the Capitol's most treasured historical artifacts, including the remains of the original Battle of San Jacinto flag, displayed behind the Speaker's rostrum. The flag is believed to have been painted by artist James Henry Beard in late 1835 as a gift for the Newport Rifles, a 52-man company of Kentucky volunteers formed to help Texans battle the Mexican army.

The Senate Chamber is located on the second floor of the east wing of the Capitol. Restored to its c. 1910 appearance, the it still contains the original walnut desks purchased in 1888. The brass chandeliers are also original to the room. One of the chamber's most impressive aspects is its collection of historic Texas paintings, many placed in the room between 1888 and 1915. Behind the lieutenant governor's desk is a portrait of Stephen F. Austin by an unknown artist, one of the oldest artworks in the collection.



Governor's original private office. Texas State Preservation Board.

Until the 1930s, the governor's office was on the first floor of the south wing of the building. Most of the Capitol's woodwork is oak or pine, but the original governor's office woodwork and furnishings are made of mahogany. The "embossed" glass in the transoms and door panels is double acid-etched glass, typical of the type of decorative glass also visible along Capitol corridors. The room, returned to its c. 1910 appearance, is now used by a member of the governor's staff; the governor's offices are now on the second floor.

The center of the Texas judicial system was once located in the Capitol's third-floor north wing, where the Supreme Court and Court of Criminal Appeals met in nearby courtrooms. The Supreme Court judges presided in a room containing plush carpeting, walnut furniture and draperies like those found in the legislative chambers, sitting behind an elaborately carved bench. The Court of Criminal Appeals courtroom, while almost identical in layout to its neighbor, received oak furnishings, a simpler judges' bench, no drapery treatment and less expensive carpeting.³ The restoration of the Supreme Court courtroom was enhanced by the discovery of original remnants of the carpeting and back drapery, making possible an exact reproduction of the historic patterns and colors.

The original State Library was located on the north wing's second floor. It and the Supreme Court Library shared this room from 1907 until the late 1950s. The Legislative Reference Library, formerly a division of the State Library, remained in the space after the Supreme Court Library moved to another building and expanded its services and collections when the State Library relocated to a new building in the early 1960s. Returned to its c. 1915 appearance, today the room continues to function as a library for the legislature and the public.

A 1995-97 restoration project returned the historic south area of the grounds to its c. 1888 to 1915 appearance. More than 20 acres of grounds surrounding the Texas Capitol were designed to provide an appropriate setting for the building. The drives, walks, trees, plantings and related decorative elements are arranged in a formal, symmetrical way, reflecting the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century preference for classically ordered landscapes. Perimeter fencing and gates are complete with star-topped finials. Along the Great Walk, visitors pass reproductions of the original lighting, benches and fountains. Restored monuments and cannon can be seen throughout the landscape. A stroll across the restored grounds makes a visit to the Texas State Capitol complete.

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The Texas Capitol and Extension are open weekdays from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and weekends from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and the Capitol Visitors Center Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Free tours are available. The State History Museum is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 6 p.m. (TheStoryofTexas.com). Tours of the Texas Governor's Mansion will resume in 2012 (txfgm.org).

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Notes

1. Spain, France, Mexico, Texas Republic, Confederacy, United States.
2. Historic preservation work at the Capitol Complex began with the Texas Governor's Mansion. A registered National Historic Landmark since 1974, it is the oldest state executive residence west of the Mississippi River and the fourth oldest in the United States. It was first restored between 1979 and 1982. After a 2008 fire, the building is again being restored with an expected completion date of mid 2012.
3. Since 1959, the courts have not been located in the Capitol.



John Rogers, *The Council of War*, 1868. Painted plaster. The New-York Historical Society.

John Rogers, Portraitist

KIMBERLY ORCUTT

John Rogers, called “the people’s sculptor,” is arguably the most popular sculptor in American history. He is best known for his wildly popular and critically acclaimed narrative plasters, known as Rogers Groups, packed with detail, incident, and insight, and priced within most Americans’ reach. From 1859 to 1893 he sold an estimated eighty thousand of these diminutive sculptures issued in multiples, which depicted scenes from the Civil War, domestic life, and theatrical subjects from the works of Shakespeare, Washington Irving, and others. Rogers successfully straddled the boundaries of fine and popular art, and acclaim followed him from the beginning of his career to its end. In 1864, critic James Jackson Jarves proclaimed, “he stands alone in his chosen field” and his works “possess real elements of greatness.”¹ Nearly thirty years later, fellow sculptor F. Edwin Elwell stated simply and forcefully, “He made American sculpture possible.”²

Most accounts of Rogers’s work are incomplete in that they neglect to address the diversity of his oeuvre, especially the talent for portraiture that underpins it. His accomplishment cannot be fully understood without considering his careful study of the people who played out his narrative subjects and his commitment to naturalism and individualized detail. Rogers’s use of portraiture evolved over the course of his career in response to changes in his own life and in American culture, and he put an age-old genre to new and innovative uses in the service of a democratic art.

The Artist’s Bread and Butter

Rogers’s interest in portraiture began early. Among his first works was a bust of his mother that does not survive, but was probably created in 1849 or 1850. He found the work extremely challenging and lamented, “It has mortified me exceedingly.” As a young autodidact, he was puzzled by his own difficulty since, in his words, “it was nothing but an imitation of nature, a low branch of the art.”³ Around 1856, while working in Hannibal, Missouri, as master mechanic of the Saint Joseph Railroad, he modeled a little girl named Kitty Dodge for his group *Little Nell in the Curiosity Shop* (no versions extant).⁴



John Rogers, *John Rogers III* (1866 -1939), 1871. Painted plaster. The New-York Historical Society.

After cutting short a traditional course of training in neoclassical sculpture in Paris and Rome, John Rogers returned to the United States in 1859 and settled in Chicago. He planned to develop his genre groups – but he would also undertake portraits if the work was offered.⁵ Within a few months he began producing the narrative sculpture that marked the beginning of his professional career and precipitated a move to New York City. However, these early attempts at mass-produced sculpture were slow to sell; for instance, his now-famous *Slave Auction* (1859) was a critical success in abolitionist circles, but a financial failure. In 1860, he was so discouraged that he decided to stop work on his groups

and turn exclusively to portraiture, which he considered a more dependable source of income. In spite of his previous difficulties, he was confident that with practice he would soon be able to “catch a likeness.”⁶

Rogers began his foray into professional portraiture as a supplement to his income. As many artists had before him, he pursued the dependable commissions that provided the nineteenth-century artist’s bread and butter. He wrote to his mother that there were almost no portrait sculptors in New York and that he thought he could do well at it.⁷ Rogers practiced on a young hired model and joked about his continued difficulty that, even after two or three weeks of work, “it don’t [sic] look any more like her yet than it does the Queen of Sheba – in fact I think it rather favors the Queen.”⁸ He practiced on his family too (and a loving and patient family they were), taking numerous life masks to use as models for later portraits. In 1861, he warned that if he visited them in Roxbury, Massachusetts, “you must all make up your minds to be smothered in plaster.”⁹ Later that year he tried to cajole his parents to visit him in New York so that he could keep working on his portrait of his mother. He explained that if it was a good likeness it could lead to commissions.

The following summer Rogers considered going to Newport in the hope of securing portrait commissions. He still harbored doubts about his abilities, but he was enticed by the “sure pay” he thought that portrait commissions would provide, in contrast to the initially slow sales of his narrative groups.¹⁰ By the fall of 1862, his confidence had grown and he had high hopes that he would attract all the business he could handle in this way.¹¹ Following the age-old practice of taking portraits of friends and family to demonstrate his skills to potential clients, Rogers modeled busts of his mother and father, and he cleverly approached writers who had already lauded his work, such as Barry Gray and Henry Tuckerman, to sit for him. However, paid commissions were slow in coming, and those few came through the kindness of family and friends. For instance, Rogers’s uncle Robert C. Winthrop ordered two versions of his stepson George D. Welles, and Rogers modeled a likeness of Mrs. George O. Holyoke, the wife of his brother-in-law’s business partner.¹²

Unfortunately none of these efforts survive, with the notable exception of a bust of his mother, a successful work that demonstrates the lessons he must have learned from earlier, now lost, attempts.¹³ Sarah Ellen Derby Rogers was a beauty from a reasonably well-to-do family, and Rogers depicted the dignity and refinement that remained after the reversals of financial fortune that she experienced with Rogers’s father. She is dressed in her finest, and Rogers’s careful attention to her lace and ruffles foretell the virtuoso detail that would mark his mature works. Her expression, hairstyle and costume resemble a daguerreotype dated ca. 1860, suggesting that Rogers may have used it as an aid.

When Rogers began his professional career in the early 1860s, he was well aware of the neoclassical style that had largely defined sculptural portraiture since its beginnings in the United States; his brief training in Paris and Rome emphasized idealized and mythological subjects clad in drapery. While a few contemporary artists such as Henry Kirke Brown and John Quincy Adams built their reputations on a new naturalism expressed in bronze, other eminent sculptors such as Hiram Powers, Randolph Rogers, and Erastus Dow Palmer continued to favor the neoclassical style, particularly in portraits of private individuals, transforming wealthy American men and women into Roman senators and Greek goddesses. Ideal themes persisted into the 1860s and 1870s and neoclassicized marble busts remained in fashion, though togas would gradually give way to contemporary dress.

Rogers is noted for his pioneering departure from these neoclassical conventions, and he demonstrated his convictions in the portrait of his mother, depicting her contemporary clothing with exacting specificity. Rogers’s narrative groups can be compared to genre paintings in their wealth of detail and skillfully arranged narrative. In portraiture too, he seems to have looked to conventions of painting; painters had long depicted their sitters in clothing and hairstyles of the period. When modeling a portrait of his father in 1861 (location unknown), Rogers disdained making busts with “bare necks and drapery” in the neoclassical mode. For the young artist, his father’s collar “seems as much a part of him as his whiskers” and he scoffed, “Nobody would know him with a bare neck like a Roman gladiator.”¹⁴

In 1862, Rogers began to turn a profit from his first financially successful group, a trio of Union soldiers titled *The Picket Guard*. Thereafter he stopped mentioning portraiture as an alternative to his narrative groups; however, he did not give it up. Rather, he made portraiture an integral part of his “groups,” and as his fame grew he attracted portrait commissions throughout the remainder of his career. He apparently grew to enjoy the practice, since he created uncommissioned portraits of friends and family members. His diminutive busts of his five-year-old son John and six-year-old daughter Katherine from the 1870s are delightfully informal and engaging. John’s chubby cheeks, parted lips, and tousled curls attest to a father’s affection, and his little jacket and tie are naturalistically rendered. Both sculptures are inscribed with affectionate nicknames (“Johnnie” and “Katie”). Rogers proudly sent versions of the bust of Katie to relatives.¹⁵

Even at the height of his success as what might be called a genre sculptor in the 1870s, Rogers publicized his talent for likenesses, as if he wished to display his skill, even though he no longer needed to aggressively pursue portrait commissions. In 1872, he displayed a bust of John Osgood Stone, the Rogers family’s New York doctor, at the prestigious National Academy of Design annual

exhibition.¹⁶ It was the only sculpture singled out for comment, and *The Fine Arts* magazine called it one of the best bust portraits in the exhibition.¹⁷ He also modeled a nearly life-size statuette of Robert Gorsuch Hart, son of the painter James M. Hart, and a bust of Mrs. Edward W. Lambert, wife of the Rogers family doctor after they moved to New Canaan, Connecticut; her daughter called it “the best likeness we have of Mother.”¹⁸

Rogers may have displayed these portraits as part of a long-term plan to attract major public commissions, which were the most prestigious affirmation of respect to which a late nineteenth-century American sculptor could aspire. But he executed only a handful of this type of commission, now all but forgotten. His sitters included John Earl Williams, president of the Metropolitan National Bank of New York (1870); distinguished physician Willard Parker (1877, another work that garnered praise at the National Academy of Design¹⁹); and Venezuelan president José Antonio Páez (1890). Rogers was also chosen to create an equestrian monument to Civil War hero John Fulton Reynolds, a Union Major-General who fell at the Battle of Gettysburg; the bronze still stands at Philadelphia’s city hall. At the very end of his career, Rogers completed a large seated plaster of Abraham Lincoln that was honored with a medal at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago and afterward presented to the city of Manchester, New Hampshire.

Rogers combined his skills as a fine artist with shrewd

business sense, and as his audience grew across the nation, he even created portraits on speculation to offer for sale. On the death of Henry Ward Beecher in 1887, he modeled a small full-length plaster. It can be assumed that the plaster was not a commercial success since existing copies are rare, but Beecher’s widow wrote to Rogers that “it speaks to my heart far more than the public one” (John Quincy Adams Ward’s bronze, now in Brooklyn’s Columbus Park).²⁰ Rogers’s *Washington* was more successful. Inspired to take the founding father as his subject by the upcoming celebration of the 1876 United States Centennial, he modeled the face after the ca. 1786 bust by French sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon. However, rather than merely copying the earlier bust, the sculptor gave Washington a thoughtful, alert expression as he looks into the distance.

Weaving Portraiture into Narrative

Independent portraits of family, friends, private commissions, and public figures punctuate Rogers’s career. However, his abiding interest and talent are most vividly demonstrated in the way that he wove portraiture into his famous narrative sculptural groups. In fact, it formed the basis for these works; the artist’s son Alex recalled that Rogers used live models for every figure he ever created.²¹ These works, intended for a public audience, represented different challenges from those that applied to private portraits. Rogers had overcome early technical problems, but a broader audience brought with

it a conceptual dilemma: what did it mean to be a “portraitist for the people” in an era when photographic images of well-known figures already proliferated? Before photography was popularized, a perfect likeness was a mark of artistic accomplishment and, more important, only those who knew the sitter personally could evaluate its accuracy. By the post-bellum period, portraits were no longer the exclusive province of the well-to-do, and when Rogers began his career, perfect photographic likenesses were available to virtually everyone. Expectations for accuracy were high, since images of political, military, and cultural figures were widely disseminated and well known. Popular standards for a true and expressive likeness were more rigorous than they had ever been before.

Rogers met these standards easily, and he found innovative ways to address the new expectations. His portraits of family members and his private commissions were for the most part unique objects, but the portraits he incorporated into his groups cast as multiples functioned differently. They too occupied a special place in the parlors of homes as private portraits often did, but these depictions were understood to have a communal function. The



John Rogers, *Playing Doctor*, 1872. Bronze. The New-York Historical Society. This sculpture is one of the master bronzes that Rogers used to create the plasters he sold to the public.



owner of a Rogers group realized that many others, even thousands, would also gaze on the very same likeness he or she was seeing. The act of contemplating, enjoying, and evaluating these portraits was understood to be a collective endeavor. Rogers's groups can be roughly divided into three themes: Civil War subjects, domestic themes, and scenes from popular theater. Each represented a different type of challenge, and Rogers showed facility and invention in his approaches to all.

Today Rogers is perhaps most admired for the Civil War-related groups that he worked on throughout the 1860s. These established his fame both as a fine artist and as a popular chronicler of Americans' fears and consolations during the conflict. His subjects spanned humorous incidents of soldiers' life in camp, the perils of life on the home front, and sensitive issues of race and reunion, both during and after the war. Among his most successful works was *Wounded Scout: A Friend in the Swamp* (1864), which depicts an injured Union soldier being assisted behind enemy lines by a heroically-proportioned escaped slave. It was lauded as "a significant lesson of human brotherhood for all the coming ages."²² Another work often called his masterpiece was *Taking the Oath and Drawing Rations* (1865), a postwar scene of a dignified Southern woman forced to take an oath of loyalty to the Union before a respectful Northern soldier in order to get the supplies she needs to feed her child. It was warmly embraced in the North as a scene of reconciliation, and in the South as a commendable depiction of Southern womanhood.

Rogers ended his long and successful series of Civil War subjects with two groups that put his talents as a portraitist to a public test for the first time. In 1868 he released *The Council of War*, which depicted General Ulysses S. Grant, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, and by-then-slain President Abraham Lincoln in one of their key councils in March 1864. The artist took great care in preparing to model the three likenesses, visiting Grant and Stanton and using photographs for reference. For the assassinated President he relied entirely on photographs. Critics noted with wonderment Rogers's great success in capturing likenesses of these three leaders, whose faces were as well known in the United States as any man's could be. Some accounts noted the particular difficulty of rendering Lincoln, whose lanky, ungainly figure was a challenge for artists to realize in the heroic fashion appropriate to the man considered a martyr for the Republic. Rogers was congratulated for not sacrificing accuracy for "elegance of form."²³ He was credited with giving the figure dignity, but also an accurate sense of the man's physical presence in the awkward placement of his legs.²⁴ The President's son Robert later wrote that his family considered *The Council of War* the most lifelike

Above: John Rogers, *Washington*, 1875. Painted plaster. The New-York Historical Society. Below: John Rogers, *Checkers Up at the Farm*, 1875. Painted plaster. The New-York Historical Society.

rendering of his father in sculpture. This was a remarkable compliment, given the many monuments to Lincoln that were erected after his death. Stanton, too, congratulated the artist for surpassing any other likeness he had ever seen.²⁵

In *The Fugitive's Story* of the following year, Rogers paid tribute to leaders of the abolitionist movement: poet John Greenleaf Whittier, editor of the abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator*; William Lloyd Garrison; and preacher Henry Ward Beecher. The three men are gathered around a desk listening to the tale of a slave who has escaped to the North with her baby. Rogers interviewed each of his three abolitionist sitters and took detailed measurements, secured photographs, and even took life masks of Beecher and Garrison. Both men wrote to Rogers with suggestions for the composition and for his portrayals of them. This is the only instance in which Rogers inscribed the names of the sitters on the base of the work in order to make his subject perfectly clear, perhaps because these men were not as universally recognizable as those in *The Council of War*. However, he need not have worried; his severest critics, the sitters, were satisfied with the likenesses: Garrison called the sculpture "a marked success, both in regard to the likenesses and as a work of art."²⁶

In the years immediately following the Civil War, Americans struggled with the difficult psychological work of understanding the cataclysmic changes that had been wrought upon the country and on their own lives. Monument building was an important part of the public task of dealing with the conflict.²⁷ Individuals could attempt the same objective privately with the aid of more personal monuments; *The Council of War* and *The Fugitive's Story* served as monuments in miniature that could be placed in one's own home. At the same time, the likenesses of the subjects took on a public dimension and became totems on which viewers could project personal memories and mourn losses. Responses to the sculptures reflect these collective and personal functions. *The Council of War* was considered "worthy of reproduction in marble as a historical subject."²⁸ *The Fugitive's Story* reportedly so moved former slave Sojourner Truth that she burst into tears remembering her own escape with her small child.²⁹

Rogers's work in the 1870s is dominated by themes of hearth and home that offered a reassuring optimism about the country's future after the traumatic years before. His 1875 group *Checkers Up at the Farm* was immensely popular. The older player is a well-to-do city dweller dressed in a suit and spats and sporting fashionable muttonchops. He stoops over the game board and holds a fan at his side, a feminine accessory that compromises his masculinity. The young farmer across from him sits bolt upright, full of energy. He is clean-shaven and simply dressed in shirtsleeves and sturdy boots. He points out his winning position to the

gentleman with a hearty laugh. During a period when populations were increasingly concentrated in cities and concerns grew about the effects of cloistered, sedentary office life on modern man's masculinity, Rogers's sculpture offered an affirmation of unspoiled Yankee intelligence. The woman presiding over the scene was modeled after Rogers's wife Hattie; as the father of a growing family (Rogers had seven children, born between 1866 and 1879), the artist naturally turned to his wife and children as models in a number of his works from this period. While his use of family members is not surprising, he showed remarkable perceptiveness and marketing savvy in the way he presented these private portraits to his by-then nationwide audience.

His group *Playing Doctor*, from a few years before, represents an amusing scene of two children dressed up in adult clothes posing as mother and doctor and pretending that a younger one is sick. Rogers's sales catalogue carefully described the scene, but it did not mention that the children were his own: Johnnie, age six; Katie, four; and Charlie, two.³⁰ This was their artistic debut, marking the first time Rogers had used his children as models. Though his sales catalogues did not identify them, Rogers made certain that newspapers did. Most notices of the new work pointed out that the children were his, adding that this would no doubt increase the sculpture's popularity.³¹ By the early 1870s, Rogers was a celebrity in his own right. Given his status as a well-known and beloved artist, his admirers would be interested in a behind-the-scenes glimpse of his personal life and his family, just as the fascination with celebrities' children enjoys renewed popularity today. The group was well received and became a familiar decoration in doctors' waiting rooms. By portraying his children enjoying an innocent amusement, Rogers universalized the joys of his own family life, and after this point the sculptor's work took an autobiographical turn, as he derived more and more of his subjects from the lives of his family and their neighbors.³²

Rogers was notably modest and reserved. He commented that when people asked for his autograph, "I always feel...that they have made a mistake and that they take me for someone else."³³ Nonetheless, he had a keen understanding of the role that celebrity played in portraiture. In the 1870s and 1880s he rendered a number of scenes from literary classics such as Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, several works of Shakespeare, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*. Rogers chose his subjects not because of their status as canonical literary works, but due to their current success on the stage. All were frequent and popular theater offerings in New York and across the country, and Rogers took the actors best known for those roles as his models.

The Rip Van Winkle story's popularity owed in large part to its huge success as a stage play starring Joseph Jefferson. One of the most acclaimed actors of his time, Jefferson first starred in a production of *Rip Van Winkle* in 1859. By 1883, he estimated that he had played the part on no less than four thousand five hundred occasions.³⁴ Rogers saw Jefferson play the role in 1869, and he asked the actor to sit for the set of three sculptures.³⁵ The series was a great success and praises connected it closely with Jefferson and his fame as Van Winkle. Rip was "attired in a dress literally copied from what Jefferson wears in the early scenes of the play, every fold and wrinkle and tatter of which is familiar to us all."³⁶ The final sculpture of the trio, *Rip Van Winkle Returned* (1871), depicts Jefferson in his familiar long beard and torn clothing, puzzling over the new world that greets him after his long slumber. The actor and sculptor worked together again nearly twenty years later on *Fighting Bob*, based on another of Jefferson's famous characters, Bob Acres in the 1775 Robert Sheridan play *The Rivals*, a perennial nineteenth-century favorite.

Rogers rendered a number of groups depicting scenes from Shakespearean plays that represent some of his most technically accomplished work, and portraiture continued to play a starring role. *Ha! I Like Not That* (1882) depicted a scene from the tragedy *Othello* in which Iago plants the seeds of doubt in Othello's mind about his wife Desdemona's fidelity. The acclaimed American performer Edwin Booth posed for Iago, and the Italian Tommaso Salvini was said to have posed for Othello.³⁷

As he did throughout his career, Rogers's work embraced the worlds of high art and popular culture. He chose plays that were not merely commercial successes, but also well-respected and time-tested literary classics. Yet Rogers's practice was informed by his understanding of a growing celebrity culture in the United States. In the second half of the nineteenth century, large cities became centers of popular and theatrical amusement, spurring a keen interest in entertainers' lives and personalities. Commercial celebrity portraiture became a wildly popular genre dominated by photographer Mathew Brady before the Civil War, focusing on soldiers and statesmen, and Napoleon Sarony after the war, concentrating on stars of the stage.³⁸ It was a common practice to collect small portraits of celebrities and organize them into albums. Such albums would likely be displayed in the parlor, where Rogers's plasters were often also placed.

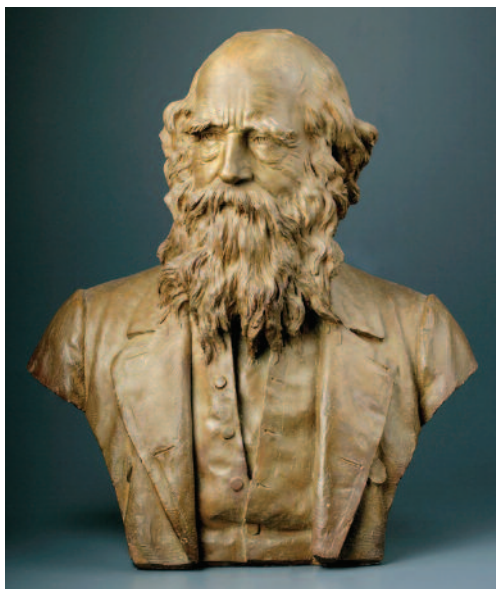
The interest in celebrity was fostered by advances in printing technology and a growing national press. The 1860s and 1870s marked the height of production for stereoscopic views and cartes-de-visite that depicted royalty, entertainers, and other notables. Rogers was intimately familiar with the workings of popular print culture, since his own sculptures, and even images of the artist himself were distributed in those forms, both with and without his permission.

Rogers's Farewell to Portraiture

Rogers's commitment to portraiture spanned his entire career and took many forms, beginning with affectionate private renderings of family and friends and extending through his sophisticated use of those images of his inner circle to celebrate American domestic life. His monuments in miniature of notable Civil War figures spoke to a shared sense of loss and a need for private reflection and reconciliation. He put his insights on the growing cult of celebrity to use when he incorporated portraits of famous actors into his theater groups. His

unprecedented popular success can be attributed not only to his remarkable ability as a sculptor, but also to his insight on American culture and intellectual life. Time and again over a thirty-year career, he was able to discern the kinds of subjects that would strike a chord with the American middle class.

Rogers's devotion to portraiture continued to the close of his working life. A growing tremor in his hands in the early 1890s foretold the end of his career, and two contrasting portraits are among his final works. Both are dated 1892, the year before he sold his business to his long-time foreman William Brush.³⁹ One is a diminutive full-length statue of Judge Henry E. Howland. This small, gentle caricature depicts the subject's head as



John Rogers, *William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878)*, 1892. Plaster painted to simulate bronze. The New-York Historical Society.

disproportionately large, and his face is dominated by a drooping moustache that obscures his mouth, although his eyes express the smile beneath it. He strikes a jaunty pose with one hand in his pocket and the other holding a book, as if he is about to speak before a friendly audience. Howland was the secretary of the Century Association, a distinguished New York social club that Rogers had joined decades before, and Rogers created the comic statue for its Twelfth Night celebrations. In the spirit of role reversal that marks the Twelfth Night tradition, the leaders of the club were sometimes subject to parodies like this one. Since the festivities were closed to non-members little is known about the event itself, but this work shows Rogers's characteristically dry, affable sense of humor.⁴⁰

This personal, comic portrait intended for a small circle of friends is complemented by a life-size bust of William Cullen Bryant, the poet and longtime editor of the *New York Evening Post*. It is not clear why Rogers chose the subject; Bryant had died fourteen years before, but the centenary of his birth was coming up in 1894. Above all, Rogers's depiction radiates the gravitas and monumentality suitable to a revered figure. Its most striking feature, however, is the bravura handling that sets it apart from his earlier works, with their carefully detailed surfaces. The flowing hair and beard, the heavy eyebrows, and even the rough texture of the coat and vest, show a freedom almost unique in Rogers's work.⁴¹

Bryant was an eminently appropriate, and even poignant, choice for Rogers's last portrait. The writer had been an early supporter of the young sculptor, and his praise of Rogers's 1868 *Council of War* applies as much to his power to render the human face and character as it does to the storytelling abilities that distinguish him today: "You have succeeded in a higher degree than almost any artist of any age in making sculpture a narrative art, and giving to motionless and speechless figures the power to relate their own adventures."⁴² Bryant understood that the power of Rogers's stories in sculpture sprang from the utterly convincing characters that

populated them. His portraits of soldiers, slaves, presidents, mothers and children, stars of the stage, friends and neighbors, whether public or private, continue to engage viewers because of the individuality, the character, and the detail that speak to us of real people with their virtues, flaws, and hopes that continue to resonate through the years.

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I would like to thank Karen Lemmey, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, New-York Historical Society, for sharing her expertise on American sculpture. My colleagues Linda S. Ferber, vice president and senior art historian, and Stephen Edidin, chief curator, offered thoughtful suggestions. I appreciate Ian Berke's enthusiastic support of the John Rogers project at the New-York Historical Society. As always, I am indebted to David Wallace for his pioneering work on John Rogers. For more information on John Rogers and images of works not illustrated here, see the New-York Historical Society website johnrogers-history.org.

Notes

1. James Jackson Jarves, *The Art-Idea: Part Second of Confessions of an Inquirer* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1864), 277.
2. Untitled article, *New York World*, August 10, 1893; Scrapbooks of Miscellaneous Clippings, etc., about John Rogers, The New-York Historical Society.
3. John Rogers (JR hereafter) to Ellen Derby Rogers, April 16, 1854, Rogers Family Papers, 1715-1955, The New-York Historical Society.
4. JR to Clara Rogers, February 22 [1857], Rogers Family Papers.
5. JR to JR, Sr., December 16, 1858, Rogers Family Papers.
6. JR to Sarah Ellen Derby Rogers (SEDR hereafter), June 29, 1860, Rogers Family Papers.
7. JR to SEDR, May 5, 1861, Rogers Family Papers.
8. JR to SEDR, Sunday [September 15, 1861], Rogers Family Papers.
9. JR to SEDR, Saturday evening [May 18, 1861], Rogers Family Papers.
10. JR to SEDR, July 13, 1862; JR to SEDR, July 17, 1862, Rogers Family Papers.
11. JR to SEDR, September 6, 1862, September 14, 1862, Rogers Family Papers.
12. David Wallace, *John Rogers: The People's Sculptor* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), 204-05.
13. In the past the sculpture was dated to 1862. It is now dated to 1874 based on the level of technical skill demonstrated in the work, and its affinity with Rogers's mature style.
14. JR to SEDR, September 21, 1861, Rogers Family Papers.
15. Wallace, 229, 236.
16. Wallace, 231.
17. "National Academy of Design: Forty-Seventh Annual Exhibition," *The Fine Arts* 1: 3 (May 1872): 51.
18. Wallace, 232, 239.
19. "Second Notice – Spring Exhibition of the National Academy of Design – The Landscapes and the Sculpture." *New York Times*, April 24, 1870, 3.
20. Eunice White Bullard Beecher to JR, July 20, 1891, Rogers Family Papers.
21. Alexander Parker Rogers, "Recollections of my father, John Rogers," unpublished manuscript, Rogers Family Papers.
22. Lydia Maria Child, *Boston Independent*, December 1865, Scrapbooks, vol. 3.
23. "John Rogers's Statuettes," *Scribner's Monthly*, January 1872, Scrapbooks, vol. 3.
24. Earl Marble, "John Rogers," *The Cottage Hearth* 3 (June 1876): 142.
25. Wallace, 219.
26. Wallace, 222.
27. For more on Rogers's Civil War groups and on Civil War monuments, see Kirk Savage, "John Rogers, the Civil War, and the 'subtle question of the hour,'" in Kimberly Orcutt, ed., *John Rogers: American Stories* (Philip Wilson Publishers, Ltd., 2010) and Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).
28. Earl Marble, "John Rogers," *The Cottage Hearth* 3 (June 1876): 142.
29. "The Fugitive's Story," *The Independent*, October 14, 1869, Scrapbooks, vol. 3.
30. Wallace, 231-2.
31. See Scrapbooks, vol. 3, and "The Rogers Statuettes," *The Evening Post* (New York), December 19, 1872, 4.
32. Additional documented examples include *We Boys* (1872); *Bubbles* (1873); *Hide and Seek* (1875); *The Traveling Magician* (1877); *Fetching the Doctor* (1881); *Neighboring Pews* (1884); *A Frolic at the Old Homestead* (1887); *The Referee* (1880); and *The Mock Trial: Argument for the Prosecution*, (1877).
33. JR to Ellen Rogers, November 6, 1884, Rogers Family Papers.
34. Gilbert A. Pierce, "A Good-By [sic] to Rip Van Winkle," *The Atlantic Monthly* 52 (November 1883): 695. See also Leo Mazow, "Read, Look, Listen: Literary Motives in John Rogers's America," in *John Rogers: American Stories*, 97-118.
35. Wallace, 111.
36. Untitled article, *Chicago Post*, May 1871, Scrapbooks, vol. 3.
37. Wallace, 250.
38. On the rise of celebrity culture in United States, see Thomas N. Baker, *Sentiment and Celebrity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); David Haven Blake, *Walt Whitman and the Culture of American Celebrity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006); and Barbara McCandless, "The Portrait Studio and the Celebrity" in Martha A. Sandweiss, ed., *Photography in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991).
39. The Rogers Statuette Co. was short-lived, publishing its last known catalogue in 1895.
40. On the Century Club's Twelfth Night celebrations, see Heather Campbell Coyle, "Laughing Matters: Art Caricature in America, 1878-1918" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 2011), 114-18, 134-36.
41. The plaster owned by the New-York Historical Society is the only known version and at its size it was unlikely that it was intended for mass production. Rogers may have hoped for a commission to cast it in bronze, since it came to the N-YHS from the Rogers family painted to resemble bronze. This distinctive handling can also be seen in his last major work, *The Landing of the Norsemen* (1893).
42. William Cullen Bryant to JR, October 18, 1869, Rogers Family Papers.



Irvingcroft, the W. I. Lincoln Adams House, Montclair, New Jersey. Frank E. Wallis, architect, 1907. Author photograph.

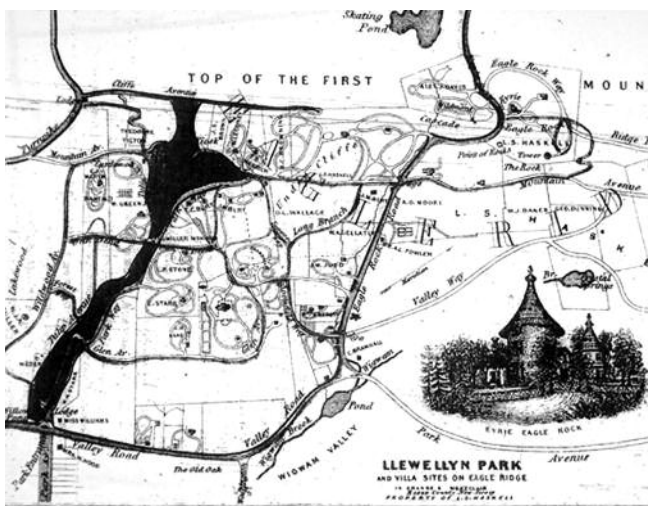
Colonial Revival in the Suburbs

THE PATH TO IRVINGCROFT

SUSAN NOWICKI

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, several forces would combine to indelibly alter the cultural and domestic landscape of the United States. One of these was the development and growth of suburbs; another, the interest in all things related to early American history and design. These forces coalesced and led to the appearance of a number of large “Colonial Revival” houses in the commuter towns outside American cities.

By the time of the great centennial of American independence in 1876, it was increasingly feasible for Americans to move outside a city’s limits and commute daily to an urban workplace, while a latent agrarian sensibility could be expressed in the cultivation of a suburban property. Thus, two concepts held dear to American hearts asserted themselves: a reinvigorated sense of nationalism and a love of land and domesticity.

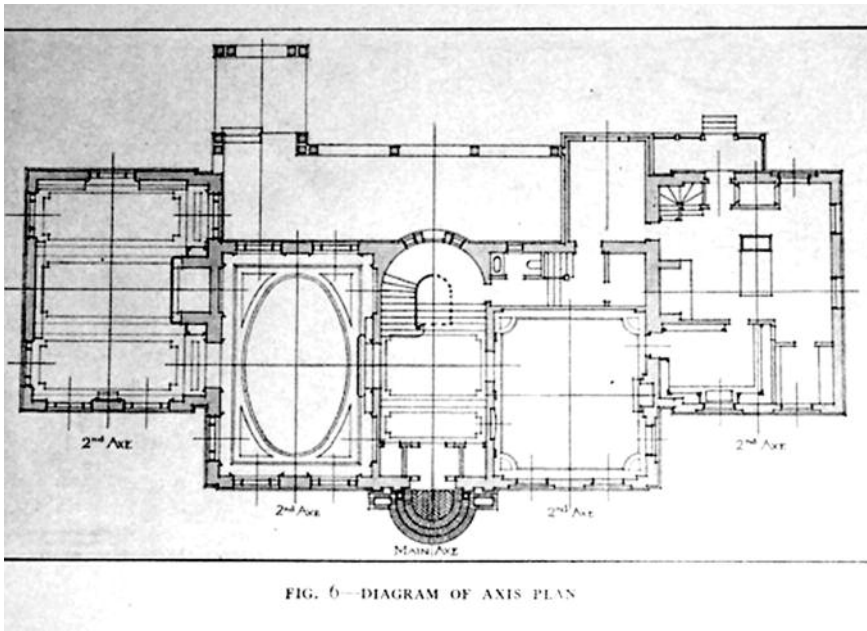


Plan of Llewellyn Park, West Orange, New Jersey, showing adjacency to Montclair at right. Washington Irving Lincoln Adams lobbied for direct access to Llewellyn Park from nearby Irvingcroft. *Directory for 1871, Street Directory, and a Business Directory of Bloomfield and Montclair, 1871.*

In Montclair, New Jersey, a New York suburb established in 1868, notions of patriotism, suburbanization and eighteenth-century aesthetics dovetailed in the design history of Irvingcroft, the house built for photography entrepreneur Washington Irving Lincoln Adams by Colonial Revival architect Frank Edwin Wallis.

A former village dotted with apple orchards, tanneries and lumber mills, Montclair was fifteen miles west of New York City on the periphery of the Hudson River highlands. Brooklyn and Manhattan residents were attracted to the natural beauty of the area. After summering in Montclair for a few years, the Adams family moved to the town permanently in 1868. Washington Irving Adams, the father of Washington Irving Lincoln Adams, was born in New York City in 1832. His ancestry was English, and local historian Henry Whittemore noted the family was distantly related to President John Adams.¹ In 1858 the senior Adams went to work for the Scovill Manufacturing Company, where he sought to advance consumer interest in amateur photography. The Scovill Company had opened in Waterbury, Connecticut, in 1802 and incorporated the first brass mill in the United States. By 1850 Scovill was invested heavily in the manufacturing of daguerreotype plates. The firm had three New York offices and a downtown warehouse, and Washington Irving Adams worked there as entry clerk, salesman, stockholder and company manager.²

In 1876 at the commemoration of the nation’s centennial in Philadelphia, Adams and colleague Edward L. Wilson peddled instant daguerreotypes: “...eight hundred seventy-three portraits were made by three operators in one day, and that by wet plate process.”³ Not only did Adams and Wilson exercise a monopoly over daguerreotype production, they also controlled the retail of accessories for these images. (In the late 1850s Scovill bought out Samuel Peck & Co., maker of photographic cases and equipment and former patent holders for the production of photo finishes.) By 1878 Scovill appointed



Frank E. Wallis, architect, diagram of axis plan of Irvingcroft. From *How to Know Architecture*, 1910.



Frank E. Wallis, architect. "Architects of To-Day," *Architecture*, February 15, 1904.

Adams director, as well as giving him sole control of the company's photography division, including the supervision of book production and publication of a trade journal, *The Photographic Times*.⁴

Adams's son, Washington Irving Lincoln Adams, was born in Montclair on February 22, 1865, and would be the only survivor of four children. He was reared and educated in the suburb and graduated from Montclair High School in 1883. As a young adult the younger Adams joined his father's enterprise and became editor of *The Photographic Times* and *The American Annual of Photography*. He wrote copy for Scovill publications and penned *The Amateur Photographer* in 1893. He later published his own photography and several artistic volumes: *Sunlight and Shadow* (1897), *In Nature's Image* (1898), *Woodland and Meadow* (1901), *Personalia* (1903) and *In the Dawn* (1905).

In Montclair the senior Adams purchased land on Park Street (or Park Avenue), renamed Llewellyn Road in the late 1890s. Washington Irving Adams's land acquisition fell within the original boundaries of Llewellyn Haskell's Llewellyn Park, the nation's first gated suburb in West Orange, New Jersey. He built a house there, Irving Croft, in a Gothic Revival style and purchased a considerable amount of undeveloped property nearby.

While the senior Adams was a savvy businessman focused inward, his son was the complete opposite.

By the turn of the twentieth century Montclair's architectural landscape was dotted with country estates designed by reputable architects and firms such as Francis Kimball, McKim, Mead & White, and George Washington Maher.

Washington Irving Lincoln Adams was extremely active in social clubs, church groups and civic societies. He was a senior associate of the Congregational Club and Quill Club of New York. In Montclair he was a high-ranking member of the town's First Congregational Church, a founder of the Montclair Trust Company and director of the town's YMCA. Irving Lincoln Adams was president general of the National Society, Sons of the American Revolution, Treasurer General of the Society of Colonial Wars, Treasurer of the Huguenot Society of America and member of the Mayflower Society.⁶ For a successful individual with ardent patriotic and hereditary interests, keen social aspirations and as a native son of Montclair, the proposition of a new family residence mandated the construction of a dwelling of distinction.

American architect Frank Edwin Wallis was born in Eastport, Maine, in 1862.⁷ He was educated in Boston and at the age of fourteen sought work in the architectural offices of Peabody and Stearns and later Cabot and Chandler. Leading architects Robert Swain Peabody and John Goddard Stearns, with their training at Harvard and the École des Beaux-Arts, served as excellent teachers for the young draftsman.⁸

After work in Boston for more than a decade, in 1885 Wallis pursued a yearlong sketching trip in Europe. In 1886 he returned to the United States and journeyed along the East Coast from New England to Georgia,

the age of fourteen sought work in the architectural offices of Peabody and Stearns and later Cabot and Chandler. Leading architects Robert Swain Peabody and John Goddard Stearns, with their training at Harvard and the École des Beaux-Arts, served as excellent teachers for the young draftsman.⁸

drawing and measuring the houses and buildings of America's past with great skill yet with a romantic sensibility – as if he took on the past or the past subsumed him in the very act of recording it. In 1887, Wallis compiled his drawings into book form and published *Old Colonial Architecture and Furniture*.⁹

Wallis's artistic skill led him to New York City in 1888 and the architectural offices of Richard Morris Hunt. Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor William Ware initiated the introduction. Beaux-Arts trained Hunt must have identified his talent immediately as he became a key aid to the architect in his Newport house designs for the Astor and Vanderbilt families and again for the Vanderbilts at Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina. Later, in 1893, when Hunt was granted responsibility for the overall plan of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and design of the fair's administration building, Wallis would factor as a vital collaborator.¹⁰

In 1888, at the time he was working for Hunt in New York, Wallis married Grace L. Parker of Boston. The couple did not reside in the city, but settled in suburban Montclair. Due to his work as senior draftsman for Hunt, Wallis took up commissions in the suburb slowly. The timing worked for him though. Once the world, or the United States at least, observed the ersatz classical architecture informing Chicago's temporary "White City," America's wealthiest wanted to dwell in houses conjuring an opulent past. Gilded Age Americans desired ready-made culture and art on demand; they requested America's new class of professionally trained architects recreate Old World domestic environments across the Atlantic.¹¹

Coupled with an interest in Early American and Old World styles, at the turn of the twentieth century many Americans were having difficulty coping with change – industrialization, urbanization, immigration, population surges – and they wanted to feel more rooted and connected to a past that they saw as a simpler time. Homes built in the style of the "Colonial" after the Civil War were viewed as beacons of patriotism and attempts to connote a sense of historic connectedness. Colonial Revival dwellings made Americans feel more rooted, even planted, in United States soil. It should be noted that the terms "Colonial" and "Colonial Revival" were used by American tastemakers not only to refer to the architecture of the nation's pre-1776 period, but rather to anything vaguely "Early American," the post-Independence federal and classical styles included; the terms also sometimes subsumed British architectural forms of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Well-to-do Montclairians embraced the style of the Colonial for its conservative quality, patriotic overtones and elements of aesthetic restraint expected of good Congregationalists (as a great many of them were). Examples of the style in the suburb were built either "correctly" in plan with the addition of many Georgian decorative details or more or less archaeologically correct but updated for modern domestic needs. In any event, Frank Wallis was designing houses in the idiom of the

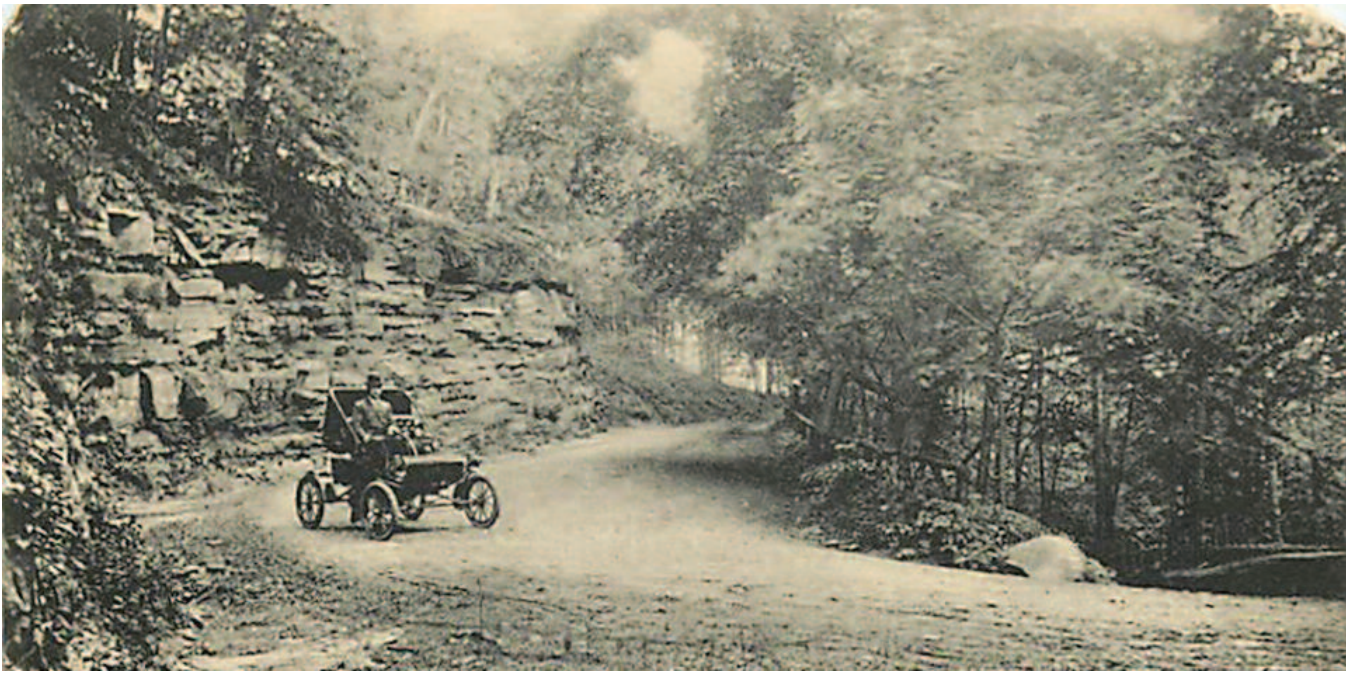


Top to bottom: Stair hall, Irvingcroft; Drawing room, Irvingcroft. Author photographs.

Colonial Revival by the mid-1890s. After Richard Morris Hunt's death in 1895, he established his own office in New York in partnership with architect George A. Freeman and with Saturday hours in Montclair.¹²

By 1894 Frank Wallis was a celebrated architect in Montclair. In a township history penned by Henry Whittemore, the architect's style was championed as one more truthful and authentic than the eclectic mix of revival styles cropping up all over new American towns:

[T]he class of old domestic work which is to be found everywhere throughout the more early settled States, such as the old manor houses along the valley of the James River in Virginia, on the banks of the Hudson, and a few of the older cities of Boston, New York and Philadelphia, which is unique in style, attractive in appearance, and combines many of the most important elements conducive to convenience and comfort. To utilize this style of architecture, and combine it with all the modern improvements, creating a new and distinctive type of American villa – known as the American domestic – was the work of a young architect – Frank E. Wallis – an assistant of Richard M. Hunt, and now a permanent resident of Montclair.¹³



“Through Llewellyn Park, West Orange, N. J.” Montclair Public Library historic image database.

Wallis was not only keenly interested in Federal and Georgian Revival styles, he was also firmly committed to the idea of early American buildings as examples of the United States’ authentic architectural heritage: “That this period architecture was interwoven in our fabric of free government, that it housed the conception and completion of our Constitution, and that it formed a stage background for our Fourth of July orations and the perorations of our politicians, must prove to our ultimate satisfaction that Colonial is our national style of architecture.”¹⁴

Irvingcroft Realized

The senior Adams acquired his parcel of land abutting Llewellyn Park in 1868. Adams’s tract was substantial. To the west it afforded a view of the Orange Mountains and toward the east a vantage of Manhattan’s skyline. It was in a word *picturesque* – a landscape waiting to be photographed.

As of the late 1880s, Frank Wallis and Washington Irving Lincoln Adams were both residents of Montclair yet another twenty years would elapse before the two men would collaborate as client and architect. The meeting of the two minds would be significant from an artistic and cultural history perspective. Born in the early 1860s, Wallis and Adams were contemporaries. Both men were highly successful, employed in art-related fields and passionately interested in the early history of the American experience. Wallis was a New Englander by birth but of Irish descent; Washington Irving Lincoln Adams was a native of Montclair but a descendant of New Englander John Adams. Wallis was an architect by

vocation; Adams was a photographer and poet by avocation. The Adams family marketed cameras to record the present; Frank Wallis designed houses that strove to preserve artistic elements of the past. Wallis would literally revive America’s earlier architectural styles, yielding Adams’s majestic Irvingcroft in 1907.

Washington Irving Lincoln Adams’s first house in Montclair was Colonial Revival in design but vernacular in spirit. The house’s façade displayed typical aspects: a symmetrical façade, hipped roof with balustrade and elaborate portico with balcony. All the appropriate motifs of a Colonial Revival dwelling were in place but slightly off kilter in artistic execution. From a contemporary view of the structure – albeit today the house is covered in stucco – one can identify a certain deficit in the rendering of architectural details, particularly in the placement and proportions of the dormers and second story Palladian window. The house’s siting was done well, though, as it materializes framed by trees and surrounded by a wide expanse of green lawn on a generous property.

The younger Adams was already prospering in his work at Scovill, but in the early 1900s when the firm began to manufacture portable film for photography, his fortunes improved dramatically. The firm had acquired the process and patent for depositing negatives on film as opposed to plate glass from the estate of a preacher in Newark, New Jersey; another company, E. and H. T. Anthony, purchased part of the process, too, and thus another Scovill merger occurred in 1907, resulting in the creation of the Ansco Company. Adams benefited well from the merger and was in an ideal position financially to build his dream house in Montclair.

By the turn of the twentieth century Montclair's architectural landscape was dotted with country estates designed by reputable architects and firms such as Francis Kimball, McKim, Mead & White, and George Washington Maher. These houses ranged in stylistic garb from Gothic to Colonial, Tudor to Craftsman, and Classical to Prairie School. In a suburban architectural tableau, which at this point could be termed a showcase for "academic eclecticism," the question Adams stopped to ask, undoubtedly, was in what style should he build his new house in Montclair – a town in which he was a native, on property originating with his father and with ancestral ties to America's founders.

Just as the Colonial Revival was the obvious choice of style, the obvious choice of architect to build Adams's dream house was Montclair resident Frank Wallis. Adams's house was built on his father's property, on the former site of the original Irving Croft. The senior Adams's house was razed and the son's house constructed in 1907. The design and construction of the new Irvingcroft was no small affair for either client or architect. The older house had sat on property adjacent to Orange Road and Park Avenue in old Montclair; the younger Adams petitioned the town council to change the street's name to Llewellyn Road in honor of the founder of the nearby and celebrated suburb. Additionally, Adams lobbied the town to create a direct access path to Llewellyn Park so that Montclair citizens, like the Adams family, would not have to negotiate the streets of the Oranges in order to reach the summit of Eagle Rock.. Instead they could be guaranteed a scenic climb through Montclair to the mountain's ridge.¹⁵

As for Wallis's work for Adams, the architect was given free rein and Irvingcroft became one of his most highly published designs among all his commercial and private projects. The house was sited on a corner lot at the south end of Montclair and bordered by a thick preserve of rhododendrons. Built on significant acreage itself, opposite Irvingcroft there were two more expanses of town green space, High Park and Nishuane Park. The house appeared to be a country estate plotted in the middle of an expansive natural preserve.

Adams's Irvingcroft, or Wallis's conception, was Georgian Revival. The house was made up of nine bays with six-over-six double hung windows. In its central portico the dwelling echoed a popular Colonial Revival precedent, specifically McKim, Mead and White's H. A. C. Taylor House in Newport.¹⁶ Irvingcroft's façade was

elegant. Corinthian pilasters supported a recessed tympanum. A semi-circular overhang buttressed by fluted Doric columns marked the main entrance, along with elliptical fanlight and prominent keystone. As a totality, Irvingcroft was a grand Beaux-Arts creation. The house's strong axial plan would serve to illustrate the architectural concept in *Wallis's How to Know Architecture* (1910).¹⁷

Contemporary photographs enable one to imagine how refined Irvingcroft was in its heyday. The house opens to a grand stair hall. Doric columns positioned at the back of the space echo those encountered on the terrace and at the threshold. Circulating to the left and into the drawing room, a large pipe organ comes into sight, with pipes running the full height of the interior. To the right, space demarcated for the estate's dining room and kitchen materializes. Remnants of Wallis's decorative touch surface in the remains of a Federal style fireplace surround located in an upstairs bedroom and in sconces, light fixtures and swag details occurring throughout the interior.

Washington Irving Lincoln Adams and his family resided at Irvingcroft for the first couple of decades of the twentieth century, but their lives were not without sadness. Adams's daughter Carolyn Styles Adams died of Bright's disease in 1910; her rooms at Irvingcroft would remain intact for the remainder of the family's time on Llewellyn Road.¹⁸ Another son was killed in World War I. Architect Frank Wallis divorced his wife in 1911 and remarried in 1914.¹⁹ In 1921 he moved to France to study medieval architecture with the intent to publish a volume on twelfth-century building guilds; he died in 1929.²⁰ Washington Irving

Lincoln Adams died in 1946, in the aftermath of World War II and at the dawn of the postwar housing phenomenon that would threaten both the serenity and architectural fabric of places like Montclair. Even so, today in Montclair, more than a hundred years old and withstanding periods of neglect and renewal, Irvingcroft remains whole and unbroken and at once triumphant and nostalgic – a beacon from a pre-modern America, an America of a more innocent time.



Fireplace with swag overmantel decoration, Irvingcroft. Author photograph.

Notes

- Henry Whittemore, *History of Montclair Township, State of New Jersey* (New York: The Suburban Publishing Company, 1894), 221-222.
- The firm originated as Abel Porter & Company but after several mergers and consolidations became known solely as the Scovill Manufacturing Company in 1850. William Marder and Estelle Marder, "Pioneers of Photography," Montclair Public Library, Montclair, NJ, Local History Collection, 3-4.
- Ibid.
- Marder and Marder, 4.
- Samuel Swift, "Llewellyn Park, West Orange, Essex County, New Jersey, The First American Suburban Community," *House and Garden* 3 (June 1903): Jane B. Davies, "Llewellyn Park in West Orange, New Jersey," *The Magazine Antiques* (January 1975) and Richard Guy Wilson, "Idealism and the Origin of the First American Suburb, Llewellyn Park, New Jersey," *American Art Journal* 79 (October 1979).
- National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (1924), s.v. "Adams, Washington Irving Lincoln;" "Major Washington Irving Lincoln Adams," *Founders and Patriots Bulletin* 9 (July 1936): 2-3
- Biographical information on Frank Wallis is scant. See the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 1932 ed., s.v. "Wallis, Frank E." and Whittemore's *History of Montclair Township*, 297. For contemporary research on Wallis, see Kevin D. Murphy, "'A Stroll Thro' the Past': Three Architects of the Colonial Revival," MA Thesis, Boston University, 1985 and Kevin D. Murphy, *Colonial Revival Maine* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 31-33, 63-65.
- See Wheaton A. Holden, "The Peabody Touch: Peabody and Sterns of Boston," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 32 (1973): 114-131 and Annie Robinson, *Peabody & Sterns: Country Houses and Seaside Cottages* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010).
- Although Frank Wallis did not study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, he did apprentice at the Boston architectural firm of Cabot and Chandler. In 1867 Frank Chandler, senior partner in the firm, studied at the Paris Ecole and in the atelier of Pierre-Gérôme-Honoré Daumet along with American architect Charles McKim. Certainly aspects of his French training were incorporated into his United States practice. See Murphy, "'Stroll Thro' the Past....," 23.
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Collecting...

Skirt Lifters

BARBARA KOTZIN

Skirt lifter? What's that? Those clever Victorians seemed to have a tool or device for every conceivable need. Skirt lifter, skirt grip, dress suspender, hem holder, page, *porte-jupe* – all of these are different words used to describe the same thing.¹ A skirt lifter is exactly what it sounds like: a device specifically used for lifting a lady's skirt, to prevent it from dragging in the dirt of the nineteenth-century city streets. When in use, this clever little device also left the lady's hands free to carry her purse, parasol, or anything else that she might wish to hold. Skirt lifters were also used when playing tennis, horseback riding, bicycling (when they may have been used in pairs), dancing or engaging in other sports such as ice skating, golf, and croquet.



"The Grappler," advertised by N. C. Reading and Co. in 1903,¹² comes with two different chatelaine clips depending on its country of origin. However the lifter portion is always identical if it bears this name. Photograph by Lisa Parker Adams.

If you decide to collect skirt lifters, be prepared; on more than one occasion when I have inquired about them of a male dealer, the reply has been, "Skirt lifter? Yeah, baby, right here!," hands held up in the air, quite proud of his humor. This wears thin. On the other hand, over the years, particularly in my early collecting days, I have been able to buy quite a few for very reasonable prices just because the seller didn't know what he or she had. Now, however, more and more people have heard of skirt lifters. They can sometimes be found with sewing items at an antiques show, but they are not easy to locate and they can be quite expensive.

I first heard the term "skirt lifter" in the 1980s while attending a local antiques show. I had asked to see something that was in a dealer's case along with some jewelry, and it looked to me like some sort of garter-like contraption. The dealer said that she thought that it was a bookmark, but that it might be a skirt lifter. I had never heard of a skirt lifter, and this piqued my curiosity. It was obvious that this particular item was used to grip something. It didn't seem like it would have held up socks, as it was too big and unwieldy. The dealer really couldn't tell me anything else, so I bought the item anyway. It was some sort of metal with a tortoise shell-like color. To this day I'm not sure whether or not it is actually a skirt lifter, and based on what I now know, I doubt that it is. But from that moment on, I was on a quest to find as many of these as I could.

Skirt lifters come in all shapes and sizes. There's no general description that fits all, but once you have seen several, you will have no trouble spotting them. Sometimes they are confused with hanky holders, but the latter are much smaller and very delicate and often made of gold. Sometimes the term skirt lifter is used to refer to the small item that attaches to a wedding dress or gown and has a loop which fits on the pinky finger of either hand, allowing the wearer to hold up the hem of the dress when dancing. However these types are not included in this discussion.

Skirt lifters are most often brass, but they can also be sterling silver, silver-plated brass, nickel, bronze or white metal.² British authority Eleanor Johnson states that "the clips were always made in non-precious metals, usually brass or plated."³ But this is definitely not the case as I have seen one or two all-silver skirt lifters, specifically one marked "Gorham" and one that I own marked "Tiffany"; these are rare and very expensive. Mary Sawdon, in her book *A History of Victorian Skirt Grips*, also makes reference to skirt lifters made not only of silver but also gold.⁴ Some lifters are very ornate and command a high price. Most of the skirt lifters in my collection are brass, silver-plated brass or some other type of white metal.

An early term for skirt lifter was *porte-jupe* (French for skirt-carrier), but this was soon followed in the English-speaking world by skirt grip, dress suspender, dress holder, or page. (While searching for skirt lifters on a trip to France, I heard one referred to as a *ponce jupe*, but this is the only time that I have heard this term.) Some early versions resembled a garter belt in that they were fitted

around the waist and had several chains that hung down to grab the skirt. In a very early drawing by Hans Holbein, dating from the mid-1500s, one is able to see the clips that originate near the waist of the woman's dress and hold the front of the garment up and off the ground.⁵ Skirt lifters were made in Britain, France, Germany, and the United States, with most of the lifters coming from England.⁶

Victorians, always quick to adopt fashion accessories, seem to have felt the need to have a distinctive item for every conceivable use. So they enthusiastically embraced these devices, and many elaborate and beautiful skirt lifters were made during this period. In fact, Mary Sawdon states that "the Victorian period was the golden age of the skirt grip."⁷ Some French fashions made use of the skirt lifter to enable the layers of beautiful petticoats worn under the skirts to become visible.⁸ However, in America during this time this was not considered proper, and ankles generally were kept covered.

The form was often customized to appeal to particular categories of buyers. A skirt lifter in the shape of an anchor might have been worn by a woman whose husband or other family member was in the navy. Horseshoe shaped lifters may have been used for horseback riding. Butterflies and birds were common themes as were faces, which were often goddess-like or cherubic in appearance. Representations of hands were also prominent.

The less ornate metal and plated brass lifters were suitable for everyday wear, while more elaborate lifters were used for formal occasions. Lifters were sometimes worn in pairs, especially when playing sports or horseback riding. Early skirt lifters consisted of a rounded loop through which one might drape the material of the skirt. The lifter may have been attached by a chain to a chatelaine clip which would have been tucked into the

waist band of a skirt. However, if one were wearing a costume without a skirt waist, the skirt lifter may have had a black or brown silk-covered jute cord or ribbon that encircled the waist and through which the skirt lifter was looped.⁹ Most of these cords that have survived are frayed and worn, which is consistent with the fact that they received a good deal of use.

Some are marked with their maker's name; Depose, Plant and Green, NCR Co., Walton and Shaws' and Fyfe's Patent were common manufacturers of skirt lifters.¹⁰ Others had special names for their particular styles, for instance "The Grappler" or the "Eureka." A lifter marked "Eureka" will look and function the same as other lifters marked "Eureka," although the metal used may be different. In this way, the desired style of skirt lifter could be purchased by name.

Sometimes a patent number, date, design, or registration number is stamped on the lifter. The issuing of patents for skirt lifters seems to have begun in 1876 even though earlier versions were in use prior to that time. In 1876 an American-made skirt lifter, the "Blackwood Magic Skirt Elevator," made its debut. This lifter was for use unseen, inside the skirt.¹¹

Mention of skirt lifters is made in *Tennis Antiques and Collectibles* by Jeanne Cherry. The author devotes a long paragraph to the evolution and description of this device, as it relates to tennis and before that, to croquet. Her description of how it works is a fairly simple one:

"[It]...worked on the principle of a pair of tongs, usually protected by rubber pads, and a sliding...clasp which pulled up to hold the tongs closed. A pull on the attached cord would raise the hem. Often a chatelaine hook on the cord or chain attached it to the belt."



(L to R): The "UWANTIT" in the closed position. The flower detail is present on both the lifter and the chatelaine clip. Fyfe's Patent: Registered September 21, 1876. Two examples of the "Eureka" skirt lifter, one in gold-colored metal, the other in silver. Photographs by Lisa Parker Adams.



Example of a bee motif skirt lifter. Photograph by Lisa Parker Adams.

She refers to a rare example of a skirt lifter owned by the Wimbledon Museum and describes it as having a pair of crossed racquets for the clasp.¹³

In *Chatelaines* (1996), by Genevieve Cummins and Nerylla Taunton, several illustrated pages are devoted to skirt lifters. The authors note that skirt lifters appeared in both *The English Woman's Domestic Magazine*, c. 1870, and *The Queen*, in 1876. In the latter, Arden Hold describes a chatelaine dress holder as a new fashion accessory.¹⁴ Most skirt lifters did not have a chatelaine hook, certainly the earliest of these did not, but it is interesting to see the chatelaine used as a frame of reference for the basis of a discussion on skirt lifters and their origins.

Eleanor Johnson describes skirt lifters as

ingenious devices looking rather like a pair of strange scissors; two pivoting arms ending in cushioned circles could be locked by a contrivance at the top between the two arms and operated by a cord suspended from the waist. A corner of the skirt hem was placed between the discs, which were then locked tight, and a pull on the cord lifted the skirt free of the ground.¹⁵

The late English author Mary Sawdon wrote the most comprehensive treatise on skirt lifters and most likely owned the largest collection of them. Her book convincingly makes the case that this little-known accessory had a very important role in the world of ladies' fashion. She describes the evolution of the skirt lifter from the earliest known illustration of one, the pen and ink drawing by Hans Holbein mentioned above. She also includes copies of various advertisements for skirt lifters, as well as copies of patent applications submitted by different manufacturers. Upon her death in 2006, Sawdon's collection was dismantled and sold in lots at auction. I was able to purchase one of the skirt lifters from her collection. As of this writing, it is believed that my own collection of over 90 skirt lifters is the largest in the United States.

As time moved on, dress hemlines became shorter and the need for skirt lifters began to diminish. No longer did the hem of the skirt drag in the street, and there was no need to employ a device to be used to lift it off the ground, so gradually skirt lifters disappeared entirely and this little-known curiosity became a thing of the past.

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Notes

1. Genevieve Cummins and Nerylla Taunton, *Chatelaines* (Antique Collector's Club, 1994), 161.
2. Mary Sawdon, *A History of Victorian Skirt Grips* (Midsummer Books, 1995), 32; Jeanne Cherry, *Tennis Antiques and Collectibles* (Amaryllis Press 1995), 128.
3. Eleanor Johnson, *Fashion Accessories* (Shire Publications, 1980), 16
4. Sawdon, 21.
5. *Ibid.*, 7.
6. *Ibid.*, 32.
7. *Ibid.*, 7.
8. *Ibid.*, 9.
9. *Ibid.*, 23.
10. Cummins and Taunton, 161.
11. Sawdon, 47.
12. *Ibid.*, 21
13. Cherry, 129.
14. Cummins and Taunton, 160.
15. Johnson, 16.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Sawdon, 21.

Caring For...

19th Century Furniture

JOHN DILKS

Many pieces of 19th-century furniture are complex in design, and may consist of several different materials – a broad variety of wood species, textiles/upholstery, metal (both applied and inlaid), porcelain, leather, glass, ceramic, tortoiseshell, shell, ivory, paint, varnishes and metal leaf. All of these will deteriorate over time, and all can be affected by everyday use of the object. This multiplicity of materials adds to the complexity of caring for and repairing or restoring 19th-century American furniture, especially at the high end of the market.

The type and degree of work to be done on a piece of furniture (the “treatment” in professional parlance) usually falls into one of these categories:

Conservation of a piece aims to arrest the decay process using a “less is more” approach to stabilize it; the goal is to keep as much of the historic fabric as intact as humanly impossible. Conservation of a piece is not necessarily aimed at improving the aesthetics, but focuses on stabilizing its current condition and preventing it from further damage.

Restoration is an attempt to return a piece that has been altered from its initial state to the way it was originally intended to look by its original creator. This work is done by strictly utilizing historically correct methods of work as well as employing the same kinds of materials as would have been used when the object was created. When repair work is done it should be done in such a fashion that in future years a trained eye can tell that a repair is simply that: a repair, not part of the original fabric of a piece.

The job of a skilled conservator or restorer is to find a balance between a piece’s function and aesthetics. During the process of study, historic finishes and surfaces yield a

treasure of information about the history of the object. Below are some considerations to which a conservator or restorer – and you – should give thought in studying a piece of furniture before deciding how best to proceed.

The **period of significance** of a piece more often than not is the time in which the object was created, but this not always the case. Perhaps the piece was owned by a prominent person in history, perhaps it was modified during a historic event. These are things which need to be carefully considered before any type of work begins.

Along with a piece’s period of significance another factor that comes into play is the **historic fabric** of the object. Any previous modification to a piece from its original state will have added to its historic fabric; its history does not end with its manufacture. Often it is the period of significance that dictates whether modifications hold importance, and all modifications should be carefully considered as part of a piece’s individual history. An example: I recently worked on a large group of furniture that was made for the 1870s Thurlow Lodge residence of California governor Milton Slocum Latham. In 1942, the furniture was sold to Warner Brothers Pictures for use as movie props. The studio made various poor quality repairs to the pieces as well as over-coating the original surfaces with flat nitrocellulose lacquer to reduce glare while the furniture was being filmed on set. While the furniture appeared in several notable motion pictures, the current owner decided that the most important period of significance was the earlier period, from 1873 to 1942. So all restoration and conservation work was geared toward bringing the furniture back to what was there during that period; all subsequent repairs and modifications were removed and the pieces were brought back to how they looked while at Thurlow Lodge. On the other hand, hypothetically speaking, if Warner Brothers had

contracted me to treat the pieces they may have had me restore them to how they appeared in their movies. In other words, a piece may have more than one period of significance.

Raw Materials. What is the piece made from? What types of woods, glues, finishes, etc., have been used? Are there any pests present, such as wood-boring insects? Is there mold present? Mildew? Excessive moisture? How well was the piece constructed? Will original construction of a piece contribute to its decay in an unstable environment?

Environment. Is the temperature and humidity of the object's environment stable, or does it fluctuate? Unstable humidity and temperature can add to shrinkage and expansion of glued joints and also lead to cracking of finished surfaces. Wood is a hygroscopic material and will react to changes in the moisture content of the air around it. Dry air will cause drying out and shrinkage of most wood, and damage can sometimes result. But an over-moist environment is equally lethal and can result in the swelling or expansion of wood. An unstable environment can cause the greatest damage to a piece of furniture depending on how it is constructed; repeated expansion and contraction can lead to loose glue joints, cracked wood, buckled veneers, and so forth. Also it is important to note if pieces are made from several different materials such as hardwood as well as softwood, metal, porcelain, etc.; these will expand and contract at different rates. Where will the piece be kept? Will it come into direct contact with sunlight? If so, ultraviolet and infrared light cause fading as well as drastic temperature changes. Daylight contains ultraviolet radiation that can cause bleaching to natural wood and pigments and, eventually, can lead to the disintegration of fabrics and textiles. Light damage is cumulative over time and irreversible without compromising an original surface. A good test is to remove the hardware from a piece that has been exposed to ultraviolet radiation; you will notice that the surface beneath the hardware retains a darker appearance, evidence as to how much ultraviolet bleaching has occurred. Avoid placing furniture in direct sunlight, or use curtains, shutters or blinds for protection against ultraviolet radiation. Another viable way to protect against ultraviolet damage is to coat windows with an ultraviolet resistant film.

Use. How will the piece be used? Wear and tear as well as direct physical force will add to deterioration and damage and will affect decisions as to which types of finishes, glues, etc., will be used in the treatment process. Will the piece come in contact with any form of pollutant, such as acids from cleaners, food, drink, smoke, etc.? Will it be cared for and kept clean from dirt?

Historic Finishes. During the 19th century there were three primary types of base finishes used for furnishings: "spirit" varnishes, "fatty" oil varnishes, and "volatile" oil

varnishes. In period texts on paint and varnish manufacture the names of chemicals, gums, resins, mineral grounds, mordants, balsams, etc., varied both geographically and chronologically. For example, in London in the 1870s "rectified spirit" was called "spirits of wine"; in New York the same chemical was referred to as "pure spirit"; and in San Francisco, "white spirits" – when in fact all described ethyl alcohol above 70% alcohol by volume. This can be confusing, but thankfully by the last quarter of the 19th century chemical cross-reference books became available and remained in print through the 1930's.

Spirit Varnishes are the most common type of varnish found on 19th-century American furniture; they are comprised of organic gums and resins dissolved in "spirits" or ethyl alcohol with an alcohol content of 70% or higher. Sometimes shellac was used, but not always; there were many other gums and resins that went into 19th-century spirit varnish as well. Balsams such as Venetian turpentine were added to add gloss and ease the brushability of the varnish, and gums such as gum elemni were added to enhance flexibility in areas exposed to harsh temperature changes, so that the finish could expand and contract along with the underlying wood. Resins such as copals and sandarac were added to spirit varnishes to add hardness to high-wear surfaces such as table tops or chairs. Spirit varnishes were applied in two methods: by brushing with fine ox-ear-hair brushes, or by the process of "friction varnishing" or "French polishing." In general, brushing (unless filled) leaves the pores of the grain open and is employed on areas where heavy undercuts in carving and ornamental work are present. French polishing is the method of using a tightly wadded fine cotton or muslin rag (often referred to as a "fad" or "rubber") to apply a series of micro-thin coats of spirit varnish using friction and pressure to push the varnish down into the pores of the wood. Mineral-based oils are then applied liberally to aid in lubrication to avoid sticking while the ethyl alcohol-based varnish transfers from the rag to the wood substrate. This process leaves a mirror-like surface when complete, with few or no pits of the grain exposed. Spirit varnishes can be tinted with carbon black or lamp black to become "ebonized" surfaces or tinted with chemical- or vegetable-based grounds, mordants and dyes (such as Vandyke crystals, gamboge or "dragon's blood") to acquire a desired tint in color; this is particularly helpful when subtle matching of various boards within a piece is necessary, or just to generally tint a piece redder, browner, yellower, etc. For polychrome work, mineral ground colors (such as lapis blue, Venetian zinc green, etc.) are mixed into spirit varnish to create bright brushable colors that will readily adhere and bond to subsequent layers below.

Fatty oil varnishes, also called "long oil" or "fixed oil" varnishes, are thicker than most other types of varnish, are self leveling with longer drying times, and have the property of polymerizing into a waterproof rubber-like

gum. The polymerization process is caused by the mixing of a dryer into the oil. Cobalt and lead have traditionally been the dryers employed; these cause the film layer to absorb oxygen from the environment, which in turn causes the varnish film to solidify uniformly from the inside out (if it is not applied too thickly). There are several oils used for fatty oil varnishes, but the most common is linseed oil, which is cooked with other gums and resins such as amber and copal to create hard elastic varnishes that can also be polished into durable glossy surfaces. These oils can be mixed with mineral grounds to become the binders for paint and were commonly mixed with white lead for white paint.

Volatile oil varnishes, also called “short” oil varnishes, are thinned with a volatile chemical such as turpentine that opens up tiny pores to allow oxygen to enter from the outside in; as the volatile substance evaporates from the varnish film, the varnish solidifies. Volatile oil varnishes are, in general, waterproof and slightly less elastic than the fatty oil variety. They do, however, have the advantage of being much thinner in viscosity, and their drying time can be much more easily controlled. They too can be mixed with mineral grounds and tinted with organics that readily dissolve in the volatile solvent employed. These varnishes were commonly used in “oil” graining work. (While oil varnishes can be – and were – applied on top of spirit varnishes, the converse does not work; spirit varnishes can not safely be applied over oil varnishes, or they will cause the oil varnish to wrinkle and the surface to fail.)

Glues

In the 19th century, animal hide glue was the most common type used in furniture making. Hide glue has the advantage of being reversible with the application of heat and steam; however, it has the disadvantage of a low tensile strength. Today it can be used on areas where when a break occurs, but only when the glue is not stronger than the surrounding wood – for when and if the glued wood fails, the glued joint should separate and not the wood. On areas where the wood itself is already broken and shattered a stronger type of glue may serve better; aliphatic resin based–glues are strong and most are reversible when exposed to moisture. This type of glue is also useful when repairing wood that has become weak with age and the furniture component being repaired will be put under the duress of direct physical force, such as the legs of a chair. Other types of glue and consolidants are available for breaks such as shattered or torn wood fibers and for small veneer repairs.

Cleaning

The first step in treating an original surface is to clean it and remove dirt and grime as well as neutralize any harmful acids or other deleterious substances. Great care must be taken in this step, often a time consuming process. A number of dry and chemical cleaners are available to the conservator, and their use is generally

dictated by the type of dirt present on a surface. If a piece has not been over-coated with a wax or oil, most of the dirt present can be removed with a water-based cleaner; however, water can harm spirit based varnishes so it should be used sparingly. A common cleaner is a potassium methyl cyclohexyl oleate, an excellent cleaning agent for historic finishes, textiles, leather, precious metals, porcelains etc. It has the advantage of being soluble in water, white spirits (such as Stoddard’s solvent or common mineral spirits) or trichloroethane. Dry cleaning sponges and eraser-type cleaners are also often employed.

Sealers and surface consolidation. Often a piece with its original surface still present has been compromised by expansion and contraction, ultraviolet radiation or damage due to wear and tear, scratches, and so on. There are many ways to approach this. Often a worn, checked and flaking original surface can be salvaged and even be made to look aesthetically pleasing. There are different chemical processes that can consolidate an existing surface or can seal it and act as a barrier coat for further top-coating, all of which are reversible. This approach is pleasing in the sense that when technology improves over time our work can be revisited, restudied and, if indicated, altered. A dry flaky original spirit varnish can also re-emulsified when treated with a solution of ethyl and butyl alcohols, while this option is extreme it can offer satisfying results with a surface that otherwise might not have been salvageable. Old surfaces that are spirit-varnished can also be re-polished with spirit-based varnish to restore luster and appearance. Micro-abrasives are sometimes used to remove oxidization and small blemishes to an old surface. While these may restore luster and shine, they do so at a cost, for any micro-abrasive removes a small amount of the surface as it polishes. Often it is better to top coat a surface and polish the top coat in order to restore the aesthetic appearance rather than to remove part of the original surface.

Documentation

When doing restoration work in particular it is paramount that the work be documented. Repairs should be either obvious to the eye, and/or they should be thoroughly documented, at the very least in writing (including measurements if necessary) or better yet photographically, along with a written narrative. When photographic documentation is done particularly when dealing with colored surfaces it is good to include a Gretag Macbeth color chart for the future calibration of color photographs. Also when matching colors it is good to document the colors with a Munsell color chart for future replication. This is so false history will not be created and that these repairs will become the historic fabric of that piece for future generations to study and possibly improve on when the time comes.

Care and Maintenance

Ideally, furniture should be kept in an environment with a relative humidity of 40% to 60%. Polishing and waxing should be done infrequently. There are several types of wax available on the market for furniture. Colored waxes are often used to hide scratches or are used initially as a treatment to soften a shiny new finish and give a more antique appearance. However repeated use of these can change the color of a piece and can, in some cases, penetrate a crazed original surface causing the wood substrate beneath to darken or change in color. For general upkeep I would recommend a liberal coating of a micro crystalline wax designed specifically for furniture. By all means avoid spray polishes containing liquid silicones or liquid waxes. These can damage a historic surface and accelerate deterioration. Routine dusting with a goat hair dusting mop is highly recommended for furniture. Metal hinges and hardware should be occasionally wiped with a soft lint free cotton rag. Waxing and polishing should be done at most once a year, or once every six months on surfaces that get a fair amount of use.

Finding a Conservator or Restorer. Often inexperienced refinishing shops advertise that they are restoration specialists, or in other cases an experienced amateur hobbyists may claim to be able to restore furniture. But if you have a historic piece of furniture that needs anything from a simple cleaning to a major restoration, you are well advised to take it to a professional who is a specialist in the field of furniture conservation or restoration. Irreversible damage can be done to a piece by an inappropriate treatment, which can often cost twice as much in time and labor to rectify.

With all of this said, when purchasing a piece of antique American furniture it may be less expensive in the long run to spend a little bit more up-front to procure a piece in decent original condition than to purchase a piece in need of major restoration.

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19 NINETEENTH CENTURY



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The Bibliophile

Harriet Hosmer: A Cultural Biography

Kate Culkin. University of Massachusetts Press, 2010.

Kate Culkin has written a fine biography of Harriet Hosmer (1830-1908), one of America's best-known nineteenth-century artists. At 159 pages (plus 41 pages of notes and an index) it is a relatively brief book, but Culkin manages to pack into it Hosmer's complete life story plus enough insightful observations of her character, relationships, and works to satisfy the reader. Dolly Sherwood's excellent biography of Hosmer, published twenty years ago, may be richer in biographical detail, have more illustrations than Culkin's book, and include a useful bibliography (which the recent publication does not). But Sherwood covers only the first half of Hosmer's long life and is not as interesting or forthcoming on issues such as gender and sexuality, required topics for any thorough understanding of Hosmer. Nevertheless, Sherwood's book is still indispensable and, read in conjunction with Culkin's and the artist Patricia Cronin's recent (2009) publication on Hosmer's work, will repay any reader interested in the artist, the genre, or the period.

Culkin is particularly successful at putting Hosmer into the context of her own time, and she does this without meandering or condescending to her reader. She clearly states, in her introduction, her theories and conclusions about her subject. Hosmer, Culkin writes, "should not be understood as a woman ahead of her time, but as a woman whose biography opens a window onto her time." To that end, she seeks to show us why Hosmer was so successful during a period when professional women had a tough time of it. Specifically, Culkin wisely avoids the hyperbole of previous writers who have portrayed Hosmer's success as some sort of miracle. It was far from that. Hosmer was able to achieve fame, fortune, and respect, Culkin observes, because (a) she was talented, and (b) she had an almost uncanny ability to find—by love, luck, or both—the patronage she needed to support it. As she proceeds chronologically through her story, Culkin periodically reminds us of her themes, ultimately weaving the facts of her subject's long, fascinating life into a whole that is intriguing, inspiring, and ultimately very human.

To start with, the list of Hosmer's patrons—which Culkin calls her "network of supporters"—reads like a "who was who" of the nineteenth century. It includes Harriet's teachers Elizabeth (Dwight) Sedgwick, Dr.

Joseph McDowell, and Peter Stephenson in America and John Gibson in Rome; literary figures Lydia Maria Child, Grace Greenwood (aka Sara Jane Clarke), Kate Field, Ida Blagdon, and Robert and Elizabeth Browning; artist Frederick Leighton; reformer and political activist Susan B. Anthony; the actress Charlotte Cushman; and even various royals, great and small, from the Prince of Wales and Maria Sophia, exiled queen of Naples, to Lady Marion Alford and Louisa, Lady Ashburton.

While all of these patrons were important to Hosmer's career in one way or another, Cushman and Ashburton were special, to say the least. Hosmer had a deep, passionate, reciprocated attraction to each of these women. While there may be some question as to whether Hosmer's relationship with Cushman was ever consummated (Cushman was involved with another woman when she first met Hosmer), there can be little doubt that Hosmer and Ashburton's was. Ashburton was the great love of Hosmer's life and both parties considered their emotional partnership to be as binding and bonding as a heterosexual marriage.

Harriet Hosmer was born and died in Watertown, Massachusetts, a neat geographical bracketing that suggests a predictable, unexceptional life, which it certainly was not. This was evident practically from the start: Harriet's father, Hiram Hosmer, had progressive ideas about raising children, irrespective of their gender. He was determined that Harriet be self-sufficient, and encouraged her natural talents. He enrolled her in the progressive Sedgwick School in Lenox, Massachusetts, and when she decided to become a sculptor (for reasons that are unclear, as Culkin admits), he allowed her, in 1850, to go to St. Louis to study anatomy with Joseph McDowell. This connection was made possible, too, by one of St. Louis's leading citizens, Wayman Crow, whose daughter Cornelia had become Harriet's best friend at Sedgwick. (Crow would be a life-time friend and supporter of Harriet). Harriet worked hard and within two years had produced and exhibited her first work, an ideal bust of *Hester*, *The Evening Star*. The respected writer Lydia Maria Child published a rave review of the bust in the New York Tribune in 1852. This gave Harriet the impetus she needed to take the next big step: a trip to Europe to continue her studies and see for herself the great monuments of Western art.

Her traveling companions on this journey were her father and the actress Charlotte Cushman, who had met Harriet in 1851 and been immediately taken with her. Cushman took Harriet under her wing (and possibly into her bed), got her settled in Rome, where Harriet would live for most of the rest of her life, and helped her get admitted as a student of John Gibson, a British RA who had become the leading expatriate sculptor in Rome.

Cushman also admitted Harriet into the circle of talented, highly intelligent women who gathered around her in Rome. Culkin is especially sharp in reporting on and interpreting Harriet's relationships with the other members of this circle (which eventually included other American sculptors such as Edmonia Lewis and Emma Stebbins). The connections between these women were often complicated: they were professional, personal, and sometimes sexual. Earlier writers have either ignored or tried to explain away Hosmer's own sexuality with various evasions, usually by explaining that, during the nineteenth century, homosexuality was not defined or understood in the same way it is today. While that is undoubtedly true, refusing to acknowledge Hosmer's emotional life is to deny her her humanity, an injustice that Culkin blessedly refuses to commit. Almost the entirety of Hosmer's life was spent living, traveling, and working with other unmarried (or widowed) women, at least one of whom, Lady Ashburton, Hosmer called her "sposa." Culkin takes us through these various relationships with an economy of language and detail but without ever selling them short. Naturally, she cites contemporary sources to support her observations, but she also interprets Hosmer's life through the lens of recent feminist and queer theory without stretching her points or making unfounded or undocumented claims.

Culkin's book is first and foremost a biography, but it is not void of art-historical analysis. Naturally, Culkin cannot discuss all of Hosmer's works (many of which, such as her famous *Puck*, are discussed in depth elsewhere), but she does effectively hit the highpoints, of which there were many. She does a particularly good job of laying out the sometimes complicated history of Hosmer's larger projects, such as her monumental *Zenobia*, which consumed her attention for several years beginning in 1857. Culkin convincingly links the sculpture to the contemporary fight for women's rights and to the antislavery movement and usefully compares it to Hiram Powers's much more famous *Greek Slave*, created a decade earlier but still wildly popular at the time. At the same time, Culkin chronicles the controversy surrounding *Zenobia* and the rebuttal made by Hosmer and her friends to accusations, evidently initiated by a jealous male sculptor, that Hosmer had not created the sculpture herself but had left both its conception and its making to her workmen in Rome.) The political machinations and issues of gender surrounding the commission by the State of Missouri for a statue of its favorite son Thomas Hart Benton, which Hosmer won in 1860 with the help of

Wayman Crow, are also clearly and succinctly explained here, as are the reasons that the finished monument fails aesthetically and iconographically.

As Culkin tells us, Hosmer's bungling of at least one major commission (a statue of famed politician and orator Edward Everett) and her failure to win several others (a sculpture of Horace Mann for the Massachusetts State House and a national memorial to Abraham Lincoln) signaled a huge shift in public taste and a drastic change in the political climate in the post-war years. Culkin uses these events to segue to the second phase of Hosmer's life. As neoclassicism, the artistic style in which Hosmer and most of her contemporaries worked, fell from favor in the decades after the Civil War, Hosmer, never one to give up the spotlight, decided to remake herself. She tried her hand at writing plays, with little success, and then decided to become an inventor/scientist, with only slightly more success. She became a proponent of the pseudo-science of spiritualism, patented a formula for artificial "marble," and even made endless attempts (pun intended) to create a perpetual motion machine. Ultimately, thanks to Culkin's sympathetic but honest accounting of Hosmer's later years, we can begin to understand the artist in the context of her entire life.

The only real problem that I see with Culkin's book—and this should be laid at the door of its editors and proofreaders—is that it contains an unusual number of misspellings, misquotes, and (especially) dropped words. (I counted over fifty such errors in the book, including the endnotes and index.) It is almost as though the book never got a final proofread. Whatever the case, Culkin has a good story to tell—one that has always intrigued the American public—and she tells it in an rational, readable, and honest manner. This book is scholarly without being tiresome, convincing without being pedantic. In the end, Kate Culkin has made a major contribution to the scholarship of American art and culture.

Reviewed by David B. Dearing

Fortress of Finance: The United States Treasury Building

Pamela Scott. Treasury Historical Association, 2010.

For all the hyped, overblown neoclassical pomp of the governmental buildings of Washington, D.C., the one urban vignette that lingers in my mind's eye is one that set a standard for the rest: the long, uninterrupted Fifteenth Street Ionic colonnade of the Treasury Building, that most monumental example of how to edge a city street. But it is more than that. It also forms one side of the vast building designed and erected between 1833 and 1869 to house the financial services of the federal government. The long, difficult struggle to create that building is here chronicled in densely documented yet lucid prose by Pamela Scott, an authority on the complicated history of the architecture of the capital city, and an indispensable guide to accessing the sources for its study. This scholarly work also aims to engage the general public (a task as difficult as trying to serve two masters). There is much technical detail here, but also gossipy discussions of political intrigue, and passages of text that legibly characterize the intentions of the various participants.

In five chapters, the author tells a complicated story with many protagonists. The first chapter is devoted to James Hoban, George Hadfield, and the first incarnation of the Treasury Building, which was destroyed by fire. The next four chapters chart, chronologically, the realization of the four wings separately erected to form the existing fabric of the Treasury Building. She limns the contributions of architects, laborers, engineers, suppliers, decorative artists, and muralists, as well as the interferences of politicians and other critics. In all parts she mingles, as she must, architectural, political, bureaucratic, artistic, technological, and social history. The result is a model monograph, and one that dramatically demonstrates that architecture is a collaborative art, even when some of those "collaborators" create havoc in the process. Robert Mills, the first architect of the new building, intended to embody in his design "permanent construction, monumentality, dignified spaces, national symbolic content" and struggled to achieve those aims despite interference from Congress. Members, especially from the South, in terms that ring familiar today, railed against spending by a "profligate Government" in a time of substantial national debt. Mills's design was vetted at the insistence of politicians by no less than three other, hardly disinterested, architects: Thomas Ustick Walter, Alexander Parris, and, although retired, Charles Bulfinch. The project was born of compromise, then, but change came much later too. The author shows that the existing colonnade on Fifteenth Street is a 1908-1909 granite replacement of Mills's deteriorated sandstone original.

A string of different architects conceived the four wings of the vast existing structure by building upon Mills's original drawings as "part of an ongoing evolutionary process," according to the author. Walter designed the South Wing, but Ammi B. Young, newly appointed architect to the Treasury Department, revised it with the help of Alexander Hamilton Bowman, an engineer. The engaging and heretofore little-remarked designer, J. Goldsborough Bruff, punctuated the interior with patriotic cast-iron decorative emblems and the muralist Hubert Schutter frescoed its walls with appropriate iconography. The West Wing, whose construction carried over the years of the Civil War, began to rise under the direction of Bowman and Young, but the latter was replaced as architect to the Treasury by Isaiah Rogers, who was quickly assisted by Alfred B. Mullett, who ultimately replaced him. It was Rogers, however, who designed the patented system of safety vaults where vast sums of money were stored, and Walter who receives credit for the western portico. The North Wing, the last erected, rose under the direction of Mullett. The whole complex story reflects the lot of talented designers trying to do good work at the center of the political maelstrom that was—and is Washington, D.C.

The tale is not just about architecture, however. There is much of human interest here, including the constant disputes among individuals that apparently provided the friction necessary to get the building completed. The reader will find entangled issues of personality, politics, the effects of changing technology, rivalry, and interfering investigations. Ms Scott also covers the travails of the laboring class: their complaints, their strikes, their dependency on the whims of Congress. At one point the government tried to reduce costs by discharging stonecutters who were single while continuing to employ married ones, leading the bachelors to send to the newspapers an advertisement for "young ladies who wish to enter the matrimonial state." There is also much biographical information about the key players, including illustrations of their portraits. My chief reservation occurs just here, for the putative image of Ammi B. Young at the Vermont Historical Society is probably not he, despite its use by Wikipedia. There is no hard documentation about either artist or sitter, and the iconography suggests a schoolmaster rather than an architect. These portraits, as well as the illustrations of drawings and vintage photographs, richly enhance the text, although the captions are much too brief, and in some instances confusing.

We now know a lot about this subject, especially about decision-making in the creation of a monumental government office building, but it is mildly astonishing how much we still do not know. Despite the piles of surviving documentation, some of it contradictory, more has vanished. Nonetheless, Pamela Scott's reading of these labyrinthine records clarifies much. She has done an

admirable job communicating what we can know now of the origins and complicated development of this major building.

Reviewed by James F. O'Gorman

The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement, 1860 - 1900

Stephen Calloway and Lynn Orr, lead curators and editors.

Exhibition organized by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London,

with the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco in collaboration with the Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Catalog published by V & A Publishing, London.

The scope of *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement* is both magisterial and myopic. This project encompasses a large exhibition and a lengthy catalog; together the two cover British high-style aestheticism thoroughly. But, the project ignores late-nineteenth-century aestheticism in the rest of the world, and gives little attention to the enthusiastic reception of aestheticism by the middle class. Full disclosure: I wrote a book about the Aesthetic Movement and middle-class American homes, so perhaps I am especially sensitive to such neglect. I would not call the project myopic if it had a different subtitle: "Masterpieces of the Aesthetic Movement in England." Through the objects on display and the essays in the catalog, a thoughtful exploration of the elite phase of the Aesthetic Movement is conducted. The Aesthetic Movement was not a style, but an attitude towards the arts, a daring search for beauty. As the introductory panel, the take-away brochure, and the lead essay by curator Stephen Calloway state, the Aesthetic Movement "sought nothing less than the elevation of this new beauty as the guiding principle of life and touchstone of all the arts." "The Cult of Beauty" investigates this attitude, at least as it was expressed by a select roster of passionate, productive scholars.

The exhibition contained a vast number of objects in widely varied media, organized around detectable themes. There were four sections, plus an introduction, each differentiated by its own "artistic" color of wall paint. The small introductory section contained both iconic and unusual Aesthetic Movement objects (Thomas Jeckyll's

sunflower andirons and Sir Frederic Leighton's monumental bronze "The Sluggard") as well as a text panel and a sinuous flower projected on the wall with colored light. This sampler set the tone for the exhibition: intelligent curation and flashy special effects. The first section, "The Search for a New Beauty, 1860s" concerned the founding fathers and *femme fatales* of the Aesthetic Movement, who in the curators' opinion were the Pre-Raphaelites (along with a few other eminent Londoners). Their paintings, photographs, furniture and finely-bound and illustrated books were shown, as well as their collections, especially their blue and white porcelain. The next section, "Art for Art's Sake, 1860s-80s" was less cohesive but revolved around the radical art shown at the Grosvenor Gallery, the interwoven activities of James Abbott McNeill Whistler and Edward Godwin as designers, and the fascination everyone seemed to express for the cultures of Japan and ancient Greece. The next and largest section, "Beautiful People and Aesthetic Houses 1870s - 1880s," featured a long row of "aesthetic portraits" (canvases in which artistic effects are more prominent than a likeness); a case of clothing; a rich selection of design manuals and schemes for interiors; pods devoted to various masters of "art manufacturers" (Morris & Co; Walter Crane; William de Morgan; Christopher Dresser; Thomas Jeckyll; Lewis F. Day; Liberty & Co.) as well as miscellaneous examples of furniture, textiles, wallpaper and ceramics. All this was followed up by a subsection on satire consisting mainly of trade cards, sheet music covers and illustrations from

Punch. The final section, “Late-Flowering Beauty-1880s-1890s,” showed the consequences of untiring adherence to the doctrine of art for art’s sake. The works were fulsome, overwrought, large-scale, and some were decidedly decadent. There were works by relative late-comers (drawings from Aubrey Beardsley and sculpture from Alfred Gilbert) as well as works from those who had managed to live long enough to attain a late style (Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Morris and Leighton).

The installation was dense with objects and labels and elaborately-staged installations – and visitors. The experience of the exhibition was, at times, a skirmish. The exhibition was mounted in a narrowish rectangular hall that opened up into a large square. The hallway was divided so as to produce a one-way path with various blind alleys. Gridlock occurred. Many small objects were grouped in small cases. Some large paintings were not given sufficient sightlines. One installation proved to be a terrible blunder. Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s parlor in 1882, lovingly depicted in Henry Treffry Dunn’s gouache that hung nearby, was recreated with a few pieces of Rossetti’s own furniture and some faithful substitutions. Unfortunately this ensemble was only visible through a series of slats cut into a wall that gave peek-a-boo views. Perhaps the intent was to tantalize, but I and my companions were frustrated as we queued for our glimpses. In the larger part of the hall, conditions were much better. The case of clothing was entrancing. A cubicle that evoked the Grosvenor Gallery’s exhibition of Whistler’s etchings was satisfying. Throughout there were treats galore: Morris’s own colored drawing for the Fruit/Pomegranate wallpaper; the Butterfly Cabinet, designed by Godwin and painted by Whistler as a harmony of honey-colored wood, yellow tiles and gilt patterns; and at least a half-dozen glorious canvases by Albert Moore. The Peacock Room, now in the Freer Gallery in Washington, D.C., was recreated by high-resolution color images projected onto a set of tall banners hung in a circle from the ceiling. One stepped into the circle for an in-the-round experience – a little bizarre, and not as good as the real thing, but an interesting substitute. The installation will, one hopes, be improved in subsequent venues. This exhibition will travel to Musée d’Orsay in Paris (12 September, 2011 – 15 January, 2012) and the de Young Museum in San Francisco (18 February– 17 June 2012). Admission to the exhibition at the V&A was an impressive £21.50 (nearly \$35). Again, one hopes for improvement.

Like many other catalogs for blockbuster exhibitions, this catalog is a deep dive into the material on display and the issues that material might suggest. The result is a “catalog” that is tangential to the exhibition – but this is not to demean the effort. Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle Orr, co-curators of the exhibition and editors of the catalog have produced a book that will last.

The catalog is arranged as a series of major and minor essays, all of them magnificently illustrated. There are nine major essays: an overview of the era; the cultural context for this avant-garde movement; the foundational

poets and essayists; aesthetic painting; the houses of artists and collectors; domestic design manuals; the Grosvenor Gallery and elite patronage; the aesthetic lifestyle; and finally, the “tired hedonists” of the late aesthetic movement. The twenty-six (!) minor essays are more or less related to the topic under which they are grouped. For example, an essay on women’s dress is logically found in the lifestyle section, but the too-brief essay on *japonsime* is found in the artists and collectors section. While all of the major essays are excellent, the briefer essays are of uneven quality. Suzanne Fagence Cooper’s “The Musical Ideal in Aesthetic Art” brilliantly demonstrates that paintings conveyed aural messages, and Colin Cruise’s piece on religion and sexuality captures the tensions so apparent in much art of the period. Some essays were merely a roundup of the usual suspects (the essay on metalwork) and some ended with a thud rather than any conclusion (the essay on wallpaper). Much end material is provided, including a bibliography, a glossary of names, and a list of objects in the exhibition. Overall, the catalog satisfies both those looking for a serious marathon read or a quick sprint – and window-shopping the illustrations is a delight.

I question some editorial decisions. There are no measurements provided for the objects illustrated, a serious omission for an exhibition catalog that resulted in serious miscommunications: Crane’s cartoon for a tapestry depicting a nearly life-sized figure of Salve is shown as a thumbnail. Some objects illustrated and referenced in one essay come up for discussion in other essays, but sometimes the plate number is provided and sometimes not. The only way to tell if any object illustrated or mentioned in the catalog was included in the exhibition is to search the object list. In fact, many items on the object list were not illustrated in the catalog. Thus the catalog is not a useful record of the exhibition. As so often the case with British publications, the texts are sparsely footnoted, which undermines the scholarship. Clearly, not enough time or attention was allotted to the coordination of essays, illustrations and object list.

That no Americans were included in this project seemed, at times, willful neglect. After all, John Singer Sargent spent most of his career in England and produced many aesthetic portraits of the English gentry. (Note: the project fully assimilates Whistler, treating him as a British citizen.) Clarence Cook is only mentioned in passing, although his book *The House Beautiful* was arguably as influential, globally, as Oscar Wilde’s lectures in the United States in 1882, which are discussed at length. The frontispiece to *The House Beautiful*, drawn by the British Walter Crane, is, however, given a full-page illustration.

The focus on English masters of the Aesthetic Movement also misses some important ideas. The Aesthetic Movement was communicated through the print media, and not only in English domestic design manuals and satire (which are discussed). Aesthetic motifs, colors, and indeed a new facility with abstract space were communicated through illustrated magazines (where America led the way), in textiles and wallpaper

(where England and America competed on par) and in transfer-printed dinnerware (where Staffordshire led the way). English examples of all these materials are included in this project, but the larger consequences of the global circulation of these goods in the middle classes are not examined. In America, a later flowering of the Aesthetic Movement produced a new genre of realistic yet saintly women (see Abbott Handerson Thayer's portraits); this project depicts women as purely decorative and/or dangerous objects. In the United States, women were leading ceramicists as both amateurs and professionals (see Maria Longworth Nichols Storer at Rookwood); this project implies that ceramics were the province of factories like Worcester and a few (male) exemplars like De Morgan. Beyond a few artists' houses, notably Leighton's, the project spends little time on architecture; all of the Queen Anne built at all price-points in the United States, France and Australia do not enter the picture. Most of all, because of the industrial revolution, the Aesthetic Movement made beauty available to all through cheaper clothing, home furnishings, and domestic and public architecture. This project's focus on masterpieces ignores the democratizing effects of the Aesthetic Movement.

But perhaps these objections are chauvinistic. The project achieves much. Countless welcome bits of information are unearthed, among them the career of Simeon Solomon, and the diminutive size of the infamous

Worcester double-sided teapot in the form of a limp-wristed male/female. Walter Pater's role as promulgator of the essential dictum of the Aesthetic Movement – the preeminence of sensual impressions – is rightly stressed. Aesthetic Movement objects are allusive, non-narrative, and they appeal to all the senses. During the Aesthetic Movement, the arts moved away from didacticism and historicism, and towards an amoral celebration of pure form. The Aesthetic Movement set the stage for modernism, and the project makes this clear, without dismissing the era as a prelude to anything else. The pure pleasure of feasting on such a bountiful assembly of artworks cannot be overstated. Pater asked that we all “grasp at any exquisite passion.” This project gives us plenty of opportunities to cultivate exquisite passion.

Reviewed by Karen Zukowski

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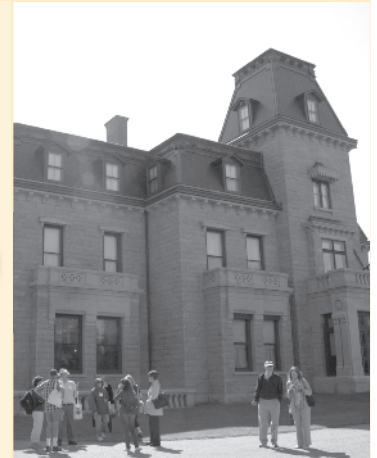
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Milestones

Words and Music - and War

SALLY BUCHANAN KINSEY

*Keep the Home-fires burning,
While your hearts are yearning,
Though your lads are far away
They dream of home*

They're all gone now. Henry John ("Harry") Patch (1898-2009) of England is gone. So are Frank Woodruff Buckles (1901-2011) of West Virginia, and Claude Stanley Choules (1901-2011) of Perth, Australia, the last known veterans of the Great War, the war that was billed as The War to End All Wars – and wasn't. Its appalling statistics survive, along with tasteful monuments, antiquated mementos, paper poppies, and half-remembered songs.

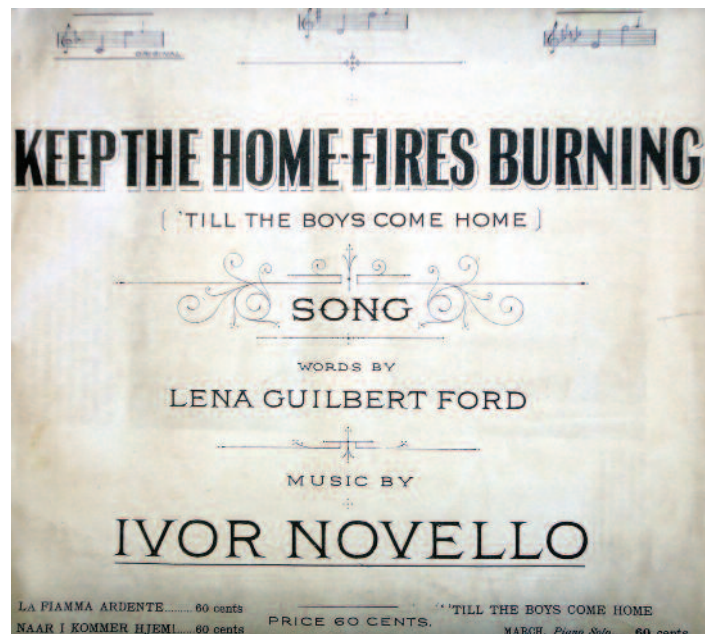
In the beginning it was a young man's war, and for some – the British quarrymen, farmers, shopkeepers – packing up the old kit bag to serve in the trenches of Europe provided an escape from anonymity into camaraderie and perhaps even glory. Naïve thinking at best, for it was a new kind of conflict, involving modern innovations – tanks, machine guns, airplanes and zeppelins, poison gas, and more – often incongruously side by side with time-proven necessities such as pack animals (including elephants), ration tins, and carrier pigeons.

The soldiers' enthusiasm was matched by a spirited public that warmed to stories of heroism and delighted in joining sing-songs around the family piano, or at the local pub. It was a heyday for sheet music; composers and lyricists were quick to capitalize on its popularity. One of the earliest (1914) and most beloved of war songs is the rousing march, "Keep the Home-fires Burning," written by a prodigious 21-year-old Welshman, David Ivor Davies (1893-1951), better known by his stage name, Ivor Novello.

Yes, that Ivor Novello. Before he was an enigmatic presence in *The Lodger* (1926), a silent film that made the cinema name of Alfred Hitchcock, and before he was a smoldering matinee idol in London, Hollywood, and on Broadway, Ivor Novello was a songwriter, thanks to a formidable stage mother and his own musical gifts. When he wrote the music for "Home-fires," Ivor had already been an accomplished soloist with the Magdalen College boys' choir at Oxford; and a

published composer whose works had debuted at prestigious Albert Hall in London.

Novello's collaborator as lyricist for "Home-fires" was a 44-year-old American poet living in London. Little is known about the mysterious Lena Guilbert Ford, only that, ironically, in 1916 when much of the city was in actuality, burning, she died in an incendiary bomb explosion during a zeppelin raid. As the war slogged on, folios of "Home-fires" were marketed under the original given title, "Till the Boys Come Home." Tragically, so many thousands of them did not. Often in performances, the tempo of the song was slowed to a funereal dirge.



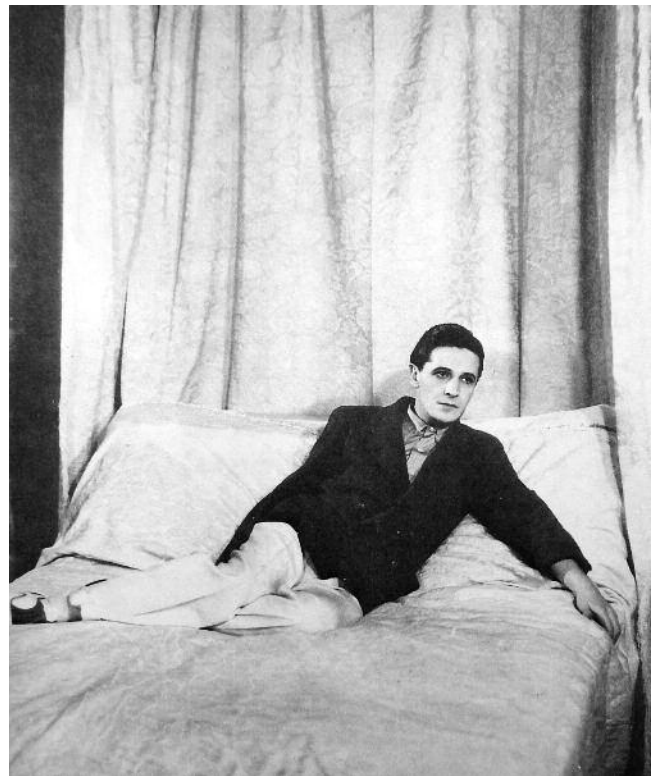
Title Sheet, 1914, Courtesy of Public Library Music Collection, Syracuse, NY.

Ivor Novello was conscripted into the Royal Naval Air Service. After the armistice he enjoyed a glittering career as a stage and movie actor, songwriter, and director and producer of “plays with music” until his sudden death in 1951. Keen listeners may have recognized a snippet of his poignant anthem to love, “We’ll Gather Lilacs,” written during World War II, as background music in the recent PBS adaptation of the novel *South Riding* by Winifred Holtby.

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Ivor at ease, c. 1925. Private collection.

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