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Rockwell Kent, cover for *Architec-tonics*, 1914. Bowdoin College Library.

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Reception room, view towards chimneypiece and door to side hall, undated photograph, c. 1877. Courtesy, Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum.

The Egyptian Revival Reception Room at Cedar Hill

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The Egyptian revival reception room at Cedar Hill, a country house in Warwick, Rhode Island, is a rare if not unique survival, with its wall and ceiling treatments, woodwork, fireplace, furniture and decorative objects intact.[1] A close examination of the variety of influences and combination of design approaches in its decorative program and furnishings sheds light on an important phase of the Egyptian revival that emerged in the 1870s.

The prominent Rhode Island businessman William Smith Slater built the 28-room house as a wedding gift for his eldest daughter, Elizabeth Ives Slater, upon her marriage to Alfred Augustus Reed, Jr., on May 19, 1870. Since the reception room ultimately served as an expression of the family's wealth and cosmopolitan taste, as well as an assertion of their knowledge and appreciation of the ancient culture of Egypt, an exploration of the room also provides insight into the tastes of a distinguished Rhode Island family.

Original bills and items of correspondence documenting the individuals and firms involved in creating the room show the important contributions of several individuals and firms: the leading Rhode Island architect William R. Walker, the fashionable Boston decoratoring firm W. J. McPherson & Co., the Providence carver Charles Dowler, and the Boston furniture manufacturer Doe & Hunnewell, among others.

Tracing the history of the enduring Western fascination with ancient Egyptian arts and design, episodes of the Egyptian revival reappear from Greco-Roman times to the modern era.[2] The Egyptian revival of the early 1800s following Napoleon Bonaparte's military campaign in Egypt and the 1920s "Tutmania" following Howard Carter's rediscovery and excavation of King Tutankhamen's tomb are well-known episodes of Egyptomania.

The worldwide attention focused on the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 served as an impetus for the Egyptian revival of the late nineteenth century, yet the myth of ancient Egypt had long permeated the American consciousness. In the first half of the nineteenth century, American cemetery entrance gates, military monuments, courthouses, prisons, Masonic lodges, libraries, medical colleges, and even synagogues and churches were built in the Egyptian revival style.[3] Renewed local interest in Egypt was generated by events such as the public viewing of a mummy brought to Providence, Rhode Island, in 1824 and Boston's "mummy fever" in the summer of 1850 during the unwrapping of an ancient Egyptian embalmed corpse at the public lectures of the amateur Egyptologist George R. Gliddon.[4] Thomas Cook's Tours of Egypt and the Holy Land began in 1869, and travel literature as well as frequent articles on archeological discoveries appeared in newspapers and illustrated magazines such as *Harper's Weekly* to sustain Americans' popular awareness and enthusiasm for the ancient Egyptian civilization. A large assortment of fashionable consumer products appeared in the Egyptian style in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, ranging from tea sets and clocks to glassware and jewelry.

Reception room. Photo by Wayne Cabral.
Courtesy, Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum.

Reception room. Photo by Wayne Cabral.
Courtesy, Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum.

However, the Egyptian revival remained an unconventional theme for domestic interior decoration within the broader emerging taste for the imaginary and exotic by elite American patrons who commissioned themed spaces such as Japanese, Islamic, Persian and Indian-inspired rooms, as well as Turkish smoking rooms. While Cedar Hill's reception room has more recently been recognized as "one of the most elaborate and extraordinary Egyptian rooms to be found on either side of the Atlantic," no published commentary has yet come to light to show related nineteenth-century evaluations by tastemakers writing on house decoration.[5] Cedar Hill is one of the finest private residences built in Rhode Island in the post–Civil War period. Before the gaudy heyday of nearby Newport, where rich and fashionable New Yorkers, Bostonians and transplanted Southerners built summer cottages and palatial oceanside residences, established Rhode Island families built houses in the surrounding countryside of Warwick, Rhode Island, some ten miles south of Providence. Situated on a hilltop site overlooking Greenwich Bay, Cedar Hill was built in an area known as Cowesett, located between the towns of East Greenwich and Warwick. The land where Cedar Hill stands was acquired by Alfred Augustus Reed (1817-1878) for $10,000 from the Town of Warwick in 1869 after having been used for many years as a "poor farm" known as Asylum Farm. Descended from old New England society, the Dorchester, Massachusetts, merchant had made his fortune in the East India trade and served as United States Consul to Java in the 1850s before he came to Rhode Island as an entrepreneur in the textile industry. Establishing Oriental Mills in Providence and Oriental Print Works in Apponaug in the 1860s, Alfred A. Reed also built a country house, Edgehill, which once stood on the property adjoining Cedar Hill on the north. After Reed gave a portion of his land to his son Alfred A. Reed, Jr., William S. Slater then paid his son-in-law one dollar for the land in 1872 and gave the land to his daughter.[6] Cedar Hill has always remained in the ownership of women as it has passed down from mother to daughter for four generations, and it is now known as Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum.[7]

Cedar Hill's impressive façade and richly appointed rooms are representative of the wealth and stature of William S. Slater, a member of one of the preeminent textile manufacturing families of Rhode Island society. As the nephew of Samuel Slater, regarded by many as the founder of the cotton manufacturing industry in America, William's involvement in overseeing a portion of the family's extensive cotton mills among a variety of industrial and financial interests enabled him to build Cedar Hill for his daughter at the recorded cost of $136,284.53.[8] Construction of Cedar Hill commenced in 1872 and continued over eighteen months. While the interiors were largely complete by 1875, furnishing the home continued until 1877. Despite the economic

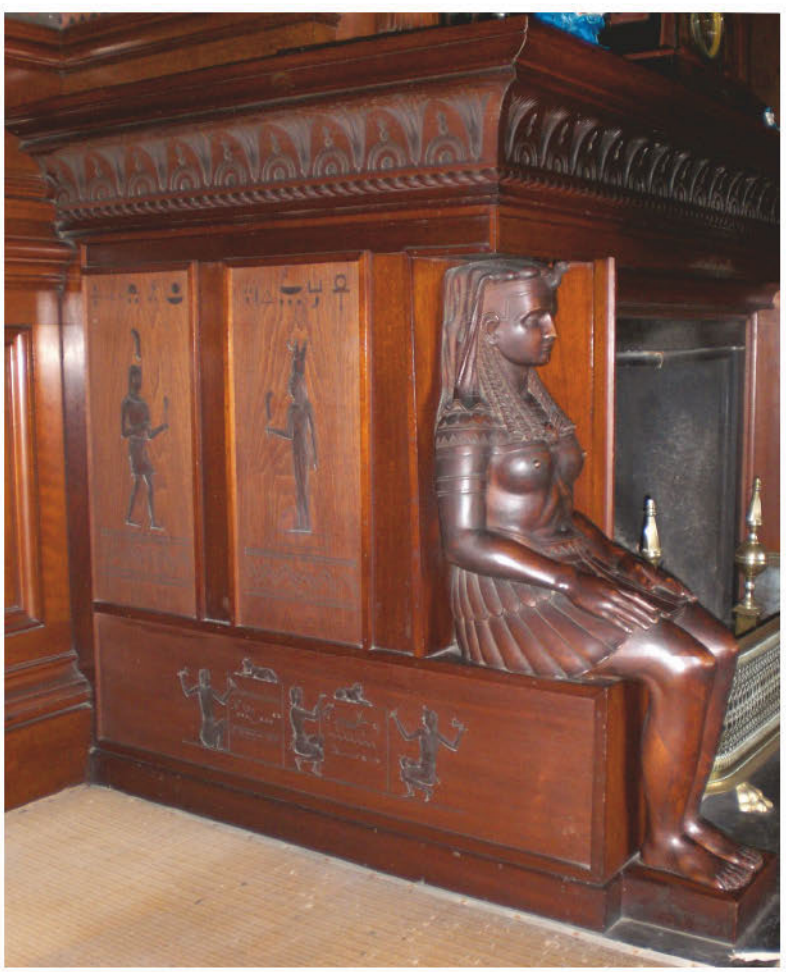
depression following the panic of 1873, building and furnishing Cedar Hill progressed without any apparent slowing of pace, attesting to Slater's financial stability.

Slater selected the leading Rhode Island architect Gen. William R. Walker (1830-1905) to build the house. Walker's long and distinguished career included building mills, schools, churches, and state armories as well as establishing an architectural dynasty that continued with his son and grandson. In the 1860s and 1870s, Walker's commissions included city and country residences for a number of Rhode Island industrialists. The architect's Gothic revival design for the rusticated pink and blue granite façade of Cedar Hill reflects the revivalist spirit of the time, and this historicizing approach extends within the fashionably decorated principal rooms used for entertaining. Contrasted with the predominantly Neo-Grec decorative program of stenciled ornament on the walls and ceilings throughout the central hall, dining room, drawing room, and library, the Egyptian revival reception room is a decidedly exotic departure from the conventional Eurocentric themes usually considered appropriate for principal rooms.

The function of the formal reception room was to provide a place for receiving guests upon their arrival. Located immediately to the right of the front door, guests would have been shown into the reception room from the main hall or through a door from the side hall if arriving by the porte cochere during inclement weather. Guests would wait here before joining the host or hostess in the library, drawing room or dining room. Although it is the smallest of the principal rooms at Cedar Hill, the reception room communicated a striking first impression with its profusion of ancient Egyptian ornamental motifs and iconography, conveying the refined taste and affluence of the Reed family and pronouncing them as fashion-forward to all invited into their home.

The secondary use of the Egyptian room as a music room is suggested by a Doe & Hunnewell furniture bill itemizing the Egyptian revival suite of furniture, including a music cabinet and a piano stool under "Music Room" on the room-by-room list of furniture supplied for the household.[9] Also of note in the figural frieze, the fanciful depiction of harps (featuring a base ornamented by a head wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt) alludes to the room's secondary use, and an 1878 Steinway grand piano remains at Cedar Hill as well.

While no documentation has emerged to determine whether the idea for the Egyptian-themed room originated with the client or if it was suggested by the architect or decorator as the arbiter of taste, the total effect of the room speaks to the vogue for the Egyptian style that fired the imaginations of Americans in the 1870s. The stenciled wall and ceiling ornamentation created by W. J. McPherson & Co. forms the foundation of the reception room's decorative program. The firm created all of Cedar Hill's polychrome interiors, and the principal rooms remain virtually unaltered.[10] Cedar Hill represents McPherson and Co.'s only full residential commission known to exist intact – a commission authenticated by the documentation of two bills dating from 1874 and 1875. While relatively little is known of the life of William J. McPherson (1822-1900), he emigrated from Scotland to Boston in the 1840s. After establishing his business in 1845, the firm remained active for four decades, and McPherson rose to become a distinguished leader in the Boston design and decorating trades during the second half of the nineteenth century. Working in a variety of media as a "House Painter and Glazier...Fresco Painter in Enamel, Oil, and Distemper Colors" and "Decorator," McPherson advertised that his firm paid special attention "to the arranging and execution of Interior Decorations for Churches, Public Buildings, Private Residences, Halls,



Seated Egyptian and sunk reliefs on right side of fireplace.
Photo by author. Courtesy, Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum.

Hotels, &c."[11] McPherson & Co. is also recognized as one of the earliest American glass studios; advertising as "Decorative, Painted, and Stained glass manufacturers," they pioneered methods in developing leaded glass work.[12] It is possible that the newly-wed Reeds visited the firm's Art Rooms located on Tremont Street to peruse the firm's offerings of "artistic examples of Leaded Glass, comprising both domestic and ecclesiastical work of high order; choice bits of decoration; aquarelle sketches and cartoons of notable productions, and objects of art for the embellishment of interiors."[13]

McPherson & Co. offered decorative treatments "in the style of any period" to satisfy fashion-conscious clients, and the Egyptianizing patterns and figural frieze of the Reed's reception room is a singular example of the firm's decorative work in the Egyptian revival style.[14] A bill dated January 9, 1875, provides an itemized list of work completed by the firm at Cedar Hill, noting the cost of stock, painters, a decorator and foreman, as well as boastfully listing a "Leading Decorator & Designer." These expenses totaled $5,602.38, but McPherson & Co. adhered to the original contract amount of $5,000.[15]

Doe & Hunnewell music cabinet. Photo by Wayne Cabral. Courtesy, Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum.

W. J. McPherson's talent as a designer is evident in the imaginative pastiche of Egyptianizing motifs incorporated into the colorful bands of conventionalized floral and geometrical ornament and figural frieze that delineate the Victorian tripartite division of the reception room's walls. Beginning on the walnut dado border, separated from the recessed paneling by a carved bundle of reeds, is a painted foliate motif of a plant with spade-shaped leaves.[16] A colorful lotus pattern runs along the wall directly above the wainscoting. Crowning the Pompeian red field is a figural frieze framed by ornamental borders, and the cavetto cornice is embellished with a multi-colored band of blooming lotus plants. The ceiling, thirteen feet high, is framed by geometric borders accented by corner ornaments of lotus buds and feathers.[17]

The design aesthetic employed by McPherson & Co. reflects the widespread stylistic influence of the mid-nineteenth century English design-reform movement and an awareness of the design theories espoused by Owen Jones in *The Grammar of Ornament*, first published in 1857, as well as those of his student Christopher Dresser. While none of the designs depicted in the chapter on Egyptian ornament in *The Grammar of Ornament* are directly copied in the reception room's decorative program, McPherson likely had access to this book and used its encyclopedic array of ornament as a source of inspiration and as a springboard for creative adaptations. For instance, the stylized lotus plant, adapted directly from ancient Egyptian ornamental vocabulary, is a motif seen repeatedly in the reception room. While lotus buds were recognized as symbols of birth and rebirth in ancient Egypt, here the lotus plant has been used for purely decorative purposes, to give an Egyptian feel without a specific symbolic intent. In appropriating the lotus flower and a variety of other Egyptianizing ornament into decorative bands and borders, the motifs have been abstracted from their original historical context and utilized as elements of decoration for a Western high-style domestic setting.

Similar to the imaginative and romanticized depictions of ancient Egypt by nineteenth-century Orientalist painters, the classicizing depiction of male and female figures wearing invented Egyptian garb in the room's figural frieze does not attempt to strictly follow archeological examples. Though the costumes of figures evoke a generalized Egyptian effect, the figures are not shown in the conventional composite configuration of the human body depicted in ancient Egyptian imagery in which the head is seen in profile while the shoulders are shown frontally and the chest, waist, legs and feet in profile. Additionally, unlike the processional friezes discovered in tombs and temples of ancient Egypt, the seemingly arbitrary sequence of male and female figures, representing royalty, scribes, and the priestly class, does not suggest a narrative. While certain figures wear royal regalia such as a *nemes* head cloth and others carry fans and staffs, these details quoted from Egyptian antiquity intermingle with figures that wear Greco-Roman-style togas standing in poses similar to those of classical

statuary. A closer following of Egyptian artistic conventions is seen at each corner, where a lioness-headed goddess with a human body is seated on a throne. Most likely based on the zoomorphic deity Sekhmet, the goddess of war and vengeance, she wears a headdress crowned by a protective *uraeus*, or serpent, and holds an *ankh* in one hand and a scepter topped by a lotus in the other. McPherson may have taken inspiration for the figural frieze from Regency designer Thomas Hope's frieze in his Egyptian Room, known as "Little Canopus," at his Duchess Street home in London. Hope's famous design was considered revolutionary in its time, and it is likely that McPherson was familiar with the line drawing of the room published in *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration* in 1807. While Hope claimed the figures in the processional frieze were derived from papyrus scrolls, historians have compared the design to classical friezes of the Parthenon, echoes of which can be seen at Cedar Hill.[18] In addition to the classicizing effect of the frieze at Cedar Hill, ornament from classical antiquity is seen in the egg-and-dart plaster molding framing the ceiling and a colorful plaster medallion in a Neo-Grec stylized anthemia design is in the center of the ceiling.[19]

Hanging from the ceiling medallion is the most unusual lighting fixture in the house, with an inner metal armature encased in wood carved with Egyptianizing motifs. The premier manufacturer of gas lighting fixtures in the 1870s, New York firm Mitchell, Vance & Co., furnished Cedar Hill with a variety of ornate gas lighting fixtures.[20] While it is impossible to determine which item represents the reception room's gasolier on the bill dating from December 1874 to January 1875, the fixture may have been a custom order, as the company advertised "Special Designs Furnished When Required."[21] Another possibility is that Mitchell, Vance & Co. provided the metal armature, etched globes, and other parts listed on the bill, while the furniture firm Doe & Hunnewell provided the carved wood elements.[22] The gasolier consists of two circular tiers covered in carved abstract ornament, connected by columns with palmette capitals reminiscent of the foliate capitals of ancient Egyptian temples. The vulture is a well-known ancient Egyptian motif often associated with the goddess Nekhbet, and four stylized vultures with flat, board-like wings, thick legs, heavy claw feet and an elaborate feathered tail stand atop the upper circular tier. The ceramic shade covering the center burner with white-blossomed lotus plants against a royal blue background and abstract geometric patterns adds further Egyptian flare to the gasolier. In addition to the inventive adaptation of Egyptian motifs by the designer, the gasolier employed the most advanced technology for artificial light at the time as it is fitted with automatic Argand burners. Indeed, the best technology of the day is found throughout Cedar Hill, with, for instance, an annunciator system and combination call bell and burglar alarm system. A March 4, 1874, letter from E. Holmes of Holmes Burglar Alarm Telegraph Co. of New York City commented on the impression that the "extraordinary house like yours" had made on his company's representative, who after visiting reported "that you have the best house in the state."[23]

Following the tradition of high-style, elaborate European and American interiors, the reception room's fireplace is its most dramatic element. The mantelpiece design shows the creative adaptation of an Egyptian ornamental motif from *The Grammar of Ornament*, while the seated figures flanking the fireplace are based on an eighteenth-century chimneypiece design by Piranesi. With the Victorian love of ornament extending to every surface, the decoration continues on the side walls of the chimney with figural scenes in sunk relief in imitation of ancient Egyptian wall reliefs.

Beginning on the walnut dado border, separated from the recessed paneling by a carved bundle of reeds, is a painted foliate motif of a plant with spade-shaped leaves

Collaboration between the architect, William R. Walker, and the Providence carver and sculptor, Charles Dowler (1841-1931), is indicated in a bill dated September 21, 1874, listing the charge of $53.50 for Dowler's "carving for Egyptian Mantle as drawn by Mr. Walker."[24] Carved in shallow relief on the mantel is an alternating pattern of a conventionalized lotus blossom and a geometric motif with a rope-like border at the lower edge. The design appears to be derived directly from No. 26 on Plate VII in *The Grammar of Ornament*. Walker's library likely included a copy of this important publication among his valuable imported books, unfortunately lost in a fire in 1884.[25] Walker and Dowler's adaptation of the flat pattern from the colorful lithograph into a walnut mantel shaped like a cavetto cornice, a detail widely found in ancient Egyptian architecture, shows the broad influence Owen Jones inspired.

Dowler created the carving and decoration for a number of Walker's architectural commissions, including residences built for the leading businessmen of Rhode Island and the Narragansett Hotel, considered the finest in Providence at the time.[26] The three carved fireplaces he contributed to Cedar Hill – the seated Egyptians in the reception room, water birds in the dining room, and dancing satyrs for the library – along with classically-inspired columns enriching the library bookcases and foliate staircase ornament – offer a glimpse into the breadth of his residential work. Originally from Birmingham, England, Dowler came to Providence in 1863 and was listed as a "Carver, Modeler, and Ornamental Designer" advertising "All kinds of Carving for Furniture and House in the latest style of the art" in Providence directories.[27] Over his long career, his work extended beyond decorative architectural carving to encompass chasing patterns for jewelry, painting, and creating models for monumental sculpture.

The clock with matching candle holders originally selected to grace the mantel shelf, visible in an early photograph of the room, is made of black slate with incised and ormolu Egyptian-inspired motifs. The clock's face is marked *Henry T. Brown, Providence*. The clock likely dates to the 1870s, but no bill recording this purchase has been found. The family also acquired a more lavishly embellished mantel clock and matching obelisk garniture retailed by Tiffany & Co.[28] Both Egyptian-inspired clock sets were likely French imports sold by American retailers and show the popular and romanticized conceptions of the Egyptian revival style. The clocks share architectonic shaping and a fanciful appropriation of ancient Egyptian motifs, such as the falcon-headed god Horus, cobras, vultures, bulls' heads, recumbent sphinxes, mummy cases, and decorative pseudo-hieroglyphs.

The large overmantel mirror with a walnut frame embellished with Egyptian revival ornament was furnished by the Boston furniture firm of Doe & Hunnewell, who advertised themselves as "Designers and Manufacturers of First Class Furniture, Mantels, Mirrors, Drapery Curtains and Shades." Doe & Hunnewell furnished the Reed's entire household, as enumerated room-by-room in a "Memorandum of Furniture selected by Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Reed Jr.," dated March 21, 1874. Although once a prominent firm in Boston, then a flourishing furniture center for the New England region, little is known of Doe & Hunnewell, and few pieces of furniture are documented. The variety of styles and designs produced for Cedar Hill show the breadth of the firm's work. The designs range from the walnut dining room suite carved with long-billed birds and growling wildcats to the drawing room's matching mahogany music cabinets and table with intricate ivory and ebony marquetry evocative of Italian Renaissance grotesque ornament. Mr. and Mrs. Reed could have easily made a trip into Boston by train to visit Doe & Hunnewell's fashionable showrooms located at 198 and 200 Tremont Street. But it was not so simple for the company to deliver the furniture, as hinted at in a letter dated January 21, 1876, from Doe & Hunnewell to William Slater, in which the company wrote, "We have visited the house several times and considering the location, which is a trying one for furniture, we think our work has stood remarkably well, there having been only a few matters requiring our attention."

Doe & Hunnewell's overmantel mirror frame depicts stylized bundles of reeds, accented with an assortment of Egyptianizing ornament. Stylized feathers, birds and a sun disk accent the top corners, and the base, shaped like an inverted ancient Egyptian bell-shaped capital, has and adjacent lotus flower ornament. The conventionalized design of the bundle of reeds may be derived from the ribbed shafts of ancient Egyptian columns representing bundled papyrus stalks.[29] While this classicizing rendition does not closely resemble ancient Egyptian examples, the motif creates a unified decorative treatment as it is incorporated into the walnut dado and the window cornices, from which hang the original gold damask drapery. Elements of Doe & Hunnewell's design show a closer following of ancient Egyptian precedents in certain details, such as the rendering of a carved and applied vulture crowning the center of the mirror frame. The vulture with spread wings bears a close resemblance to the imagery copied from an ancient Egyptian relief and depicted in plate 53 in a popular multi-volume work first published in 1837, Sir Gardiner Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*. As illustrations like this were published in a variety of books on ancient Egyptian civilization, the designer could have selected this detail from any number of sources.

No design drawings or further evidence for the reception room's fireplace have surfaced beyond a bill dated June 6, 1874, which lists the cost of Dowler's carving "2 Egyptians" as $175. It is possible that Walker provided a design for Dowler to execute, as referenced in the September 21, 1874, bill, although with the praise lauded upon Dowler for his "rare skill as an artist" and his "fecundity of intuitive talent as a designer," the role that his own artistic sensibilities may have played, along with the architect's vision for the room, should not be discounted.[30] Dowler's Egyptian female figures bear a striking resemblance to a pair of figures seated in profile on either side of a fanciful Egyptian-style chimneypiece design created by Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1788). Published in 1769, *Diverse Maniere d'adornare I camini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizie* (Diverse Manners of ornamenting chimneys and all other parts of houses), includes this extravagant design, *Camino egizio con monanti decorate con grandi figure sedute* (Egyptian chimney with mounting decorated with great seated figures), among eleven etched plates of chimneypieces in the *stile Egiziano*. While Piranesi's design for a densely ornamented chimneypiece covered in pseudo-hieroglyphs and figures from ancient Egyptian mythology was likely never executed in full, it is plausible that Walker had this book in his library and selected elements from the print for the fireplace design. Piranesi's seated figures have

been interpreted as male and as based on the Colossi of Memnon, but the bare-breasted females at Cedar Hill present the idealized youthful beauty of an Egyptian goddess or royal figure and embody an exotic "Other" to the Western viewer.[31] Cedar Hill's version closely follows the posture and Egyptianizing costume of Piranesi's design with a vulture headdress (although with a small-beaked bird at the forehead), headcloth and coifed wig, *wesekh* collar, and kilt, as well as the defined abdominal musculature. While the pose follows certain formal conventions associated with Egyptian statuary, such as the strict frontality of the placid gaze and the palms of the hands resting flat on the lap, this is not an attempt to slavishly copy examples of Egyptian statuary with archeological correctness. Much like Piranesi's reinvention of Egyptian ornamental vocabulary, the Victorian attitudes towards design that influenced the decorative program of the reception room involved throughout Cedar Hill. The scenes depict figures and activities popularly associated with Egyptian culture and mythology. Depicted in a lower panel on the left side of the fireplace, kneeling men chiseling hieroglyphs onto *steles* with crouching lion statues above are a loose imitation of Egyptianizing imagery that lacks the sophistication and angularity seen in ancient Egyptian reliefs. Repeated on the two separate upper panels on each side of the fireplace are striding male and standing female figures whose accessories, costume, poses and pseudo-hieroglyphs imitate conventions of ancient Egyptian reliefs in a simplified manner. Depicted in the lower panel on the left side of the fireplace, a man standing next to a large scale is a segment taken from the scene of the Judgment of the Dead. This scene, copied from ancient Egyptian tombs, was widely known through reproductions in publications such as Dominique Vivant Denon's profusely illustrated *Description de l'Egypte*

L to R: Henry T. Brown clock c. 1870s. Tiffany & Co. clock c. 1880s.Photos by author. Courtesy, Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum.

looking to the past for inspiration and imaginatively reworking eclectic elements.

Offering a surprise around each corner, the Egyptian-style decoration continues with six inset panels with figural scenes in sunk relief on the projecting sides of the chimneypiece. Although none of the surviving bills itemize this work, it is possible that Dowler, the carver, provided the panels. However, this work appears to be less sophisticated with chisel gouges visible in comparison to the highly-finished quality seen in his mantel and figural carving. Perhaps an artisan with the general contractor, French Mackenzie & Co. of Providence, carved the panels for the fireplace as this firm provided the wainscoting for the reception room and woodworking (1809-1828), which could have served as a design source. Seemingly unrelated is an adjacent female figure walking towards another man with a mortar and pestle. When the Reed family entertained guests, these side panels could have served as conversation pieces suggesting the mysteries and myths of Egypt.

The Doe & Hunnewell suite of Egyptian revival furniture rivals the sophisticated designs produced by contemporary New York firms such as Pottier and Stymus, Alexander Roux, Kimbel & Cabus, and Herter Brothers. The walnut suite of furniture for the reception room, including two armchairs and six side chairs along with a sofa, center table, and music cabinet, illustrates the "Rich and Unique Furniture designed and manufactured

to order" that Doe & Hunnewell so proudly advertised.[32] Their design demonstrates that the elite Boston firm was capable of creating an original design, a unique departure from the opulent ebonized and gilt versions of Egyptian revival style furniture created for New York City's fashionable clients. A high attention to detail is evident in the array of shallow carved and incised ornament embellishing the furniture. The application of flat, geometrical ornament that adorns the crest rails, stiles and seat rails of the chairs and sofa conveys an Egyptianizing decorative character to the Victorian furniture forms. Two of the ornamental patterns found widely in ancient Egyptian imagery are inventively applied to the seating furniture with a zig-zag motif, a symbol for water in ancient Egypt, incised in the seat rails, and wing-shaped knee brackets carved like feathers. An abstract sunburst carved in shallow relief adds ornamental flair to the central section of the sofa's tripartite back, likely derived from the solar disk in ancient Egyptian iconography that represented the sun god, Re. Yet the sunburst, reeds, zig-zags and other Egyptianizing motifs are fancifully adapted here for decorative and stylistic purposes without symbolic meaning. Although the Eastern-influenced design of interlaced red and green arabesques, arches and paisley motifs in the original upholstery is not of ancient Egyptian derivation, tastemakers of the day would have approved of the intermingling of Turkish or Moorish flavor in the Egyptian room. The blending of exotic design elements associated with Near Eastern cultures was commonly employed in artistic interiors, and this recognizably Near Eastern pattern would have been considered an appropriate complement for the Egyptian-style furniture. The inventive fusion of ancient cultures and reworking of motifs from antiquity can also be seen in the design of the center table. The skirt of the table top is incised with a zig-zag motif accented with winged sun disks flanked by abstract birds. In ancient Egyptian iconography, winged sun disks were flanked by a *uraeus* on either side as a protective symbol, but throughout the reception room, this detail has been replaced by a bird, as seen on the furniture, curtain tiebacks and wall light fixtures. Whether this alteration was the client's request or whether it simply shows the designer's lack of formal knowledge in adapting ancient Egyptian motifs, the noticeable deviation from the Egyptian symbol shows how the designers played with imagery. The seemingly incongruous design for the support and base of the center table consists of two masks of bearded males framed by wings and three massive lion's-paw feet atop the base. The bearded face does not appear to be of Eastern, but rather of European appearance, while the legs are likely derived from ancient Roman furniture.[33] The design of the center table reflects the broader phenomenon of Orientalism and the ways through which the Western imagination transformed popular conceptions of ancient civilizations.

The music cabinet is the most striking piece of furniture in the reception room as well as the most expensive piece in the suite – costing $575. While its overall form is conventional, the eclectic assortment of Egyptianizing abstract patterns, figural imagery, and pseudo-hieroglyphs give the piece its outlandish character. Crowning the music cabinet is a cavetto cornice ornamented with an incised lotus motif and sun discs flanked by birds. Sunk reliefs depicting a pharaoh and the goddess Hathor are on either side of the cabinet. Flanking both sides of the door in the upper cabinet are carved feathers, a pharaonic head wearing a striped *nemes* headdress, and a temple doorway featuring a cavetto cornice and battered walls. Set in the door of the music cabinet is a bronze plaque with a portrait in high relief, identified by a French inscription as Nitocris, Queen of Babylon. While ancient historians did indeed sometimes write of Nitocris as a queen of Babylon, ancient writings also told romantic myths about her as a female pharaoh during the Sixth Dynasty in Egypt. Depicted in the bronze plaque, the vulture headdress worn by Nitocris with its intricately detailed plumage closely replicates ancient Egyptian examples.[34] The beauty of the queen, who was described "as of fair complexion and the bravest and most beautiful woman of her time," is rendered here with a classicizing profile uncharacteristic of ancient Egyptian art.[35] In contrast to the delicately carved ornament of the upper cabinet, the bulbous baluster-like front supports hearken back to those seen on court cupboards from Tudor England; however, those at Cedar Hill feature horn-like protrusions, stylized feathers, and abstract geometrical motifs. The overloading of Egyptianizing details on the music cabinet underscores the eclectic and historicizing spirit of the Egyptian revival style.

Ancient Egypt will likely never cease to color the imaginations of artists, architects, and interior designers, as the enduring exotic appeal and decorative range of the Egyptian style has been reinvented for centuries throughout the Western world. The inventive interior design and furnishings of the Egyptian revival reception room at Cedar Hill show a fresh artistic reimagining of the style in America. Those who had a hand in creating the appearance of the room took the Egyptian decorative vocabulary and combined it in consciously new ways – to the marvel and delight of both the family's nineteenth-century guests and to visitors today.[36]

Cedar Hill, now known as Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum, is located at 4157 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island. The house is open to the public for tours by appointment. See www.cloudshill.org or call 401-884-9490.

Notes

1. It is difficult to determine the extent of Egyptian Revival interiors in America during this period. Two documented examples known from photographs are Dr. William Hammond's Egyptian library in New York City, dating to 1873, and the parlor of Samuel Eberly Gross in his Chicago mansion, c. 1880-81.
2. See James Steven Curl, *Egyptomania, A Recurring Theme in the History of Taste* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1994).
3. Richard G. Carrot, *The Egyptian Revival, Its Sources, Monuments, and Meaning 1808-1858* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 103, 108.
4. See Advertisement, "The Egyptian Mummy…", *Providence Patriot*, September 1, 1824, 3; "The Egyptian Mummy…", *Providence Gazette*, September 1, 1824, 2; "Last week of the Egyptian Mummy," *Providence Patriot*, October 6, 1824, 3. Scott Trafton, *Egypt Land, Race and Nineteenth-Century American Egyptomania* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 41, 42.
5. Marcus Binney, "Cedar Hill, East Greenwich, Rhode Island: The home of Mrs. Monterey Holst," *Country Life*, April 3, 1986, v. 179 no. 4624, 865.
6. Deed, October 12, 1872, Recorded November 8, 1872. See Book 361, page 265, Land Deed Records, Warwick Town Hall, Warwick, R.I.
7. All of the original bills, receipts and letters mentioned are in the Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum archives.
8. A master list of payments titled, House at Warwick R.I. an account with William S. Slater, records payments made from to April 29, 1872 to March 26, 1877. The value of $136,284 in 1877 is approximately $2,880,000 today (2009 Consumer Price Index).
9. For instance, the Kelley & Mooney bill dated July 26, 1863, lists "Reception Room" whereas the March 4, 1874, Holmes Burglar Alarm Telegraph Co. contract proposal lists "Egyptian Rm."
10. Deterioration in the condition of the wall and ceiling treatments is visible with surface cracks and discoloration where burst pipes damaged the ceiling in the reception room.
11. Advertisement, W.J. McPherson, 1872 *Boston Directory*, 1272.
12. Ibid., 1272, 1273.
13. W .J. McPherson, *Decoration* (Boston: 1888), n.p. The 14-page catalogue is written in "Colonial English" wording with no illustrations of the firm's work, and an arbitrary list of commissions does not include Cedar Hill. W. J. McPherson & Co.'s Art Rooms were located at 440, 442, and 444 Tremont Street in Boston.
14. W. J. McPherson, *Decoration*, Boston, 1888, n.p.
15. Receipt, A. A. Reed Jr. to Wm. J. McPherson, January 9, 1875. A December 14, 1874 bill for etched glass panes for doors lining the central hall added $399.50, bringing the total to $5,399.50.
16. The Providence contractor and builder French, Mackenzie & Co. provided the woodwork for Cedar Hill with a number of receipts dating from 1873 and 1874.
17. The room's original wall-to-wall carpeting featured a field of stylized floral ornament with a bordered design. The high-quality Axminster carpet, visible in an early photograph, was supplied by the prominent New York firm W. & J. Sloane, costing a considerable $385. Receipt, W. & J. Sloane to W. S. Slater, April 10, 1874.
18. David Watkin, et al. *Thomas Hope: Regency Designer* (New Haven: Yale University Press for the Bard Graduate Center, 2008), 34-35.
19. Bill, Kelley & Mooney, to A. A. Reed Jr., July 26, 1873. This Boston firm supplied "1 Centre No. 69 Reception Room" for $18.00.
20. Bill, Mitchell, Vance & Co. to A. A. Reed Jr., December 1874-January 1875. It is not possible to determine precisely which items represent the components of the gasolier and wall fixtures for the reception room from the Mitchell, Vance & Co. bill, as I have only been able to identify the crystal chandelier in Cedar Hill's drawing room as a stock design, #6717 costing $230, which matches the design featured on page 6 in a Mitchell, Vance & Co. *Catalogue of Crystal & Glass Chandeliers* from 1871.
21. Advertisement, Mitchell, Vance & Co., *The Independent…*, Sept. 8, 1870; 22, 1136.
22. This conjecture is based on "4 Gas Rosettes" costing $16, listed for the Music Room. Presumably these are for the wall lighting fixtures ornamented with carved sun discs flanked by birds. Nearly identical winged sun discs are also seen on furniture and curtain tiebacks supplied by Doe & Hunnewell. See bill, Doe & Hunnewell to William S. Slater, August 1, 1874, 4. Bill, Mitchell, Vance & Co. to A .A. Reed Jr., January 1875.
23. Letter, E. Holmes to A.A. Reed, Esq., March 4, 1874.
24. Bill, Charles Dowler, September 21, 1874.
25. "Losses by Fire," *New York Times*, Jan. 19, 1884, 1. A fire in the Vaughan Building in Providence resulted in $5,000 in losses for William R. Walker & Sons, including "reference books, many of them imported, and plans of work, including those of the new Masonic Hall, were damaged."
26. *Industries and Wealth of the Principal Points in Rhode Island* (New York: A.F. Parsons Publishing Co., 1892), 110. Dowler's charming cottage ornée still stands at 581 Smith Street in Providence with ornamental carving on the porch and ceiling paintings and plaster ornament inside that show the character of his later work.
27. Advertisement, Charles Dowler, *Providence Directory*, 1876, 660.
28. A nearly identical three-piece mantel garniture set in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (68.97.4) is dated c. 1885.
29. It has been suggested that the reed motif may also have been a reference to the Reed family name. Ed.
30. *Industries…*, 110.
31. Humbert, Jean-Michel, Michael Pantazzi, and Christine Zeigler, *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art, 1730-1930.* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1994), 72.
32. Advertisement, Doe & Hunnewell, *The American and Architect Building News*, Jan. 8, 1876, 11. No marks or paper labels were found on the Egyptian revival suite of furniture, but the memorandum authenticates the furniture manufacturers as Doe & Hunnewell.
33. Marcus Binney suggests that the table is based on Roman examples, but the lions' paws are the only element drawn from Roman antiquity. See Binney, 866.
34. I came across a summer cover for a fireplace with this same profile in relief retailed by an antiques dealer, suggesting this image may have been applied to a variety of domestic products.
35. The ancient historian Manetho is quoted in Percy F. Newberry, "Queen Nitocris of the Sixth Dynasty," *Journal of Egyptian Archeology* 29 (Dec., 1943), 51.
36. For an in-depth treatment of this subject, see Marissa Sarah Hershon, "An Egyptian Revival Reception Room, Cedar Hill, Warwick, Rhode Island, 1872-1877" (Master's thesis, The Smithsonian Associates-Corcoran College of Art + Design, 2010).

Stanford White, Madison Square Garden, opened 1890.

The Electrified Goddess

Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Stanford White and *Diana* at Madison Square Garden

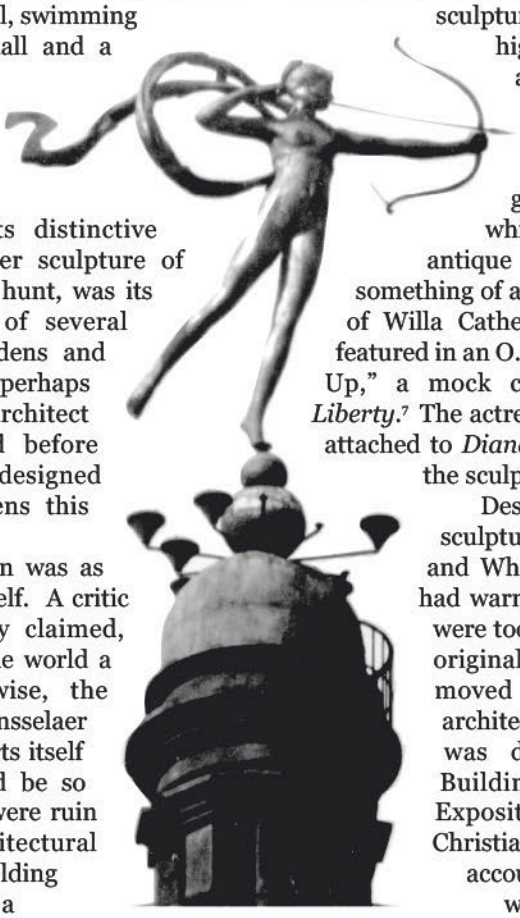
ELIZABETH LEE

With the installation of Augustus Saint-Gaudens's eighteen-foot statue *Diana* atop Stanford White's colossal new Madison Square Garden in 1891, a Gilded-Age landmark was complete – for the moment, at least. Located at Madison Avenue and 26th Street in New York City, this building by White and his firm was not the first Madison Square Garden to occupy the setting, but it was by far the most ambitious; boasting a central arena capable of seating nearly twenty-thousand visitors and equipped with a theater, concert hall, swimming pool, shopping arcade, meeting hall and a rooftop garden, it was, in the words of one critic, "a compendium of the city life in one volume."[1] The Garden's tower, modeled on the Giralda bell tower in Seville, gave the building its distinctive character, while the gilded copper sculpture of *Diana*, the Roman goddess of the hunt, was its most engaging feature. One of several collaborations between Saint-Gaudens and White, Madison Square Garden was perhaps the most memorable. As the architect George Fletcher Babb remarked before White's building, "Well, you've designed quite a pedestal for Saint-Gaudens this time."[2]

The reception of White's Garden was as extraordinary as the monument itself. A critic for the New York *Herald* boldly claimed, "There is probably not in the whole world a handsomer building."[3] Likewise, the architectural critic Mariana Van Rensselaer insisted that the new Garden "asserts itself without rival....Nothing else would be so sorely missed by all New Yorkers were ruin to overtake their dearest architectural possessions."[4] For many, the building signaled New York City's arrival as a site of modern cosmopolitan culture that could rival the best of Europe. As the drama critic and author John Corbin explained, "What thronging Piccadilly is to London, what the brilliant chattering Boulevards are to Paris, what the waltz-laden air of the garden of the Ring Strasse is to Vienna, this the Square and the Garden are to the metropolis of the new world."[5]

Many viewed *Diana* as the Garden's signature charm. Considered "the Golden Girl of the '90s in New York," the sculpture held the distinction of being the highest structural element in the city – at 347 feet above ground – even edging out its closest rival, the Statue of Liberty.[6] Her status as the Roman goddess of the hunt gave *Diana* an historical pedigree while at the same time offering an air of antique mystery. The sculpture was also something of a literary muse, inspiring the writings of Willa Cather and Paul Bourget. It was also featured in an O. Henry short story, "The Lady Higher Up," a mock conversation between *Diana* and *Liberty*.[7] The actress Ethel Barrymore was allegedly so attached to *Diana* that she carried a small replica of the sculpture with her when she traveled.[8]

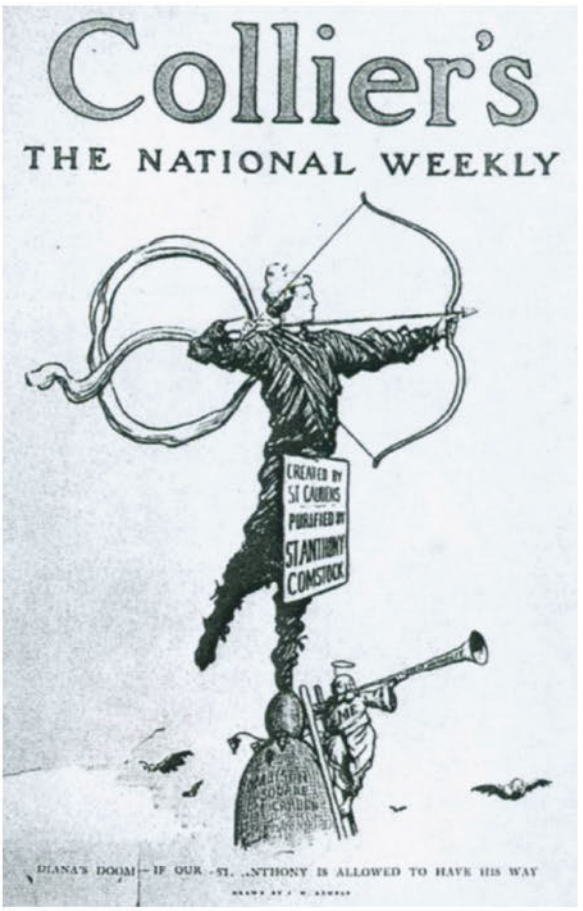
Despite all the fanfare surrounding the sculpture, many agreed with Saint-Gaudens and White, as their friend Thomas Dewing had warned, that the sculpture's proportions were too large for the building. In 1892, the original work was thus de-installed and moved to Chicago, where White's architectural firm, McKim, Mead & White, was designing the fair's Agricultural Building for the World's Columbian Exposition. Although the Women's Christian Temperance Union objected, on account of the sculpture's nudity, *Diana* was mounted on the dome of the



Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Diana, second version, c. 1894, atop Madison Square Garden, DeWitt Clinton Ward photograph, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.

Agricultural Building, where it enjoyed pride of place at the fair's Court of Honor. In 1894, a second version of *Diana* – a lighter, more svelte thirteen-foot figure (now at the Philadelphia Museum of Art) – was installed atop the Garden's tower to better effect. It was mounted on ball bearings and designed to function as a weathervane, with the figure spinning on the ball of one foot. However, high winds soon claimed *Diana*'s billowing drapery, requiring the sculpture to be bolted in place, rendering it immobile.

This minor malfunction did little to diminish public interest in *Diana*, although not every New Yorker was seduced by the sculpture's charms.[9] Anthony Comstock, founder of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, considered female nudity in art of any type a source of moral corruption – even when, at more than three hundred feet above ground, the figure's anatomical details were impossible to discern. A 1906 *Collier's* magazine cover featuring an illustration of *Diana* "dressed" in fabric with a sign – "Created St. Gaudens, Purified by St. Anthony Comstock" – gently mocks Comstock's reactionary tendencies.[10] A writer for the *New York Mercury* explained that while Madison Square had once been "the gathering place of children," ever since *Diana* arrived "what children come there are rushed through at breakneck speed in the tow of a nurse or some older person [since] the Square is now thronged with clubmen, armed with field glasses."[11] Few were seriously offended, however, and most admired *Diana* for her beauty.[12] In fact, as more than one commentator from the period observed, her chastity made this ancient goddess – who is often depicted in art renewing her virginity at a bath – an appropriate American icon.[13]



E.M Kemble, cover of *Collier's*, August 25, 1906.

Although *Diana* is discussed in the major scholarly sources on Saint-Gaudens, the sculpture has yet to be treated in a published source to an in-depth examination.[14] This article begins by addressing the long silence in the Saint-Gaudens literature surrounding *Diana* and suggests why the sculptor's only extant nude has eluded scholarly investigation. It then goes on to analyze its meaning within the context of Madison Square, showing how the sculpture functioned for Saint-Gaudens, White and their intimate circle of friends. *Diana* marks a crossroads where fine art, popular culture and bourgeois male identity meet, while it simultaneously addresses the intensely private interests of the men most involved in the sculpture's creation.

The "Disappearance" of *Diana*

Although the second version of *Diana* remained in place until White's Madison Square Garden was demolished in 1925, the sculpture began to disappear from the record long before, for reasons that are hard to explain in light of its popularity and its place within Saint-Gaudens's *oeuvre*. As we learn from the sculptor's son Homer, who edited the autobiography his father left unfinished at his death, "all his life he was anxious to create ideal figures, with scarcely an occasion to gratify his desires, this [*Diana*] indeed being the only nude he ever completed."[15] Its unique and special status is underscored by the fact that Saint-Gaudens considered *Diana* "a labor of love" and received no compensation for his work on it beyond his expenses.[16] Curiously, however, when his two-volume memoir *The Reminiscences of August Saint-Gaudens* was published in 1913, six years after the sculptor's death, the discussion of *Diana* in more than seven-hundred pages of text is limited to a mere five sentences on the last page of volume one, making the sculpture little more than a footnote in the sculptor's career.

The discrepancy between the sculpture's significance to Saint-Gaudens and its status as a passing reference in the artist's life story seems partly due to the advice of the prominent art critic Royal Cortissoz, who was hired by the book's publisher to advise Homer in the revisions of *Reminiscences*.[17] Prior to taking on this assignment, Cortissoz, a long-time critic for the *Herald Tribune*, had published a monograph on the sculptor in 1907, the year of Saint-Gaudens's death. In it, he praised the sculptor for his "appreciation of what's right and fine" and acknowledged his role in "accustom[ing] men's minds to a higher standard" in American art.[18] But Cortissoz's feelings for the sculptor exceeded this professional admiration. In a letter to Saint-Gaudens from 1906, he acknowledged his devotion to the artist in a request for a copy of a recent photographic portrait. As the critic exclaimed, "I am in love with it, and I want one. Won't

you get Mrs. Saint-Gaudens to get you to put your name on the bottom of one of those photographs, and then get her to send it to me? It looks so like you, it is absolutely the portrait that I want to put in a frame and hang up at home to look at forever and forever with the affection and admiration that I feel for you."[19]

In light of these sentiments, it is perhaps not surprising to see Cortissoz's investment in shaping Saint-Gaudens's posthumous reputation. As Homer described his own role in preparing his father's unfinished autobiography for publication, he explained that he wished to "supply what is missing concerning his [father's] attitude toward art and artists past and present, as well as to illuminate portions of his life by what his friends have told me, by various recollections, and by letters."[20] His task, as he wrote to the painter Will Low, was "to collect the materials bearing on my father's life, to know that which is true and that which is false, and to arrange the true without remark upon my part for others to comment upon as they see fit. I cannot draw conclusions, but I can certainly arrange facts."[21]

Cortissoz, on the other hand, had a much more pointed agenda. In a 17-page letter to Homer from May 19, 1911, he took issue with the manuscript's overall tone as well as with what facts he thought should be remembered. In the critic's own words, "Why drag in the Sewer Club [a "club" created by White and his friends to support their illicit sexual adventures, discussed below]? It is not funny, that whole affair was but an episode in Saint-Gaudens's life, and to many it would be repulsive [...] I am thinking of the thousands of readers who would not understand the situation and they would only think less of Saint-Gaudens." Likewise, Cortissoz insisted that "Dewing's 'Damn' and 'Hell' should go straight out. This whole chapter, in fact, could be omitted and the book be none the worse." In response to Chapter 21, Cortissoz explained, "I don't think I would leave in the part about the men with their mistresses. He never meant that letter to be published." And in Chapter 25, he insisted that "Mark Twain's anecdotes should be omitted as merely dirty, and in the rhymes in this chapter, by the way, there is room for an unpleasant construction."[22] While Cortissoz was not alone in shaping Saint-Gaudens's life story, it is hard to ignore the impact of these changes on the final published text, which biographer Burke Wilkinson describes as a "completely sanitized and quite bloodless" account that presents the sculptor as a "whitewashed almost wartless figure."[23]

The circumstances surrounding White's demise may have reduced scholarly interest in *Diana*, especially in the years shortly after his death.

Diana, perhaps more than any other single work by Saint-Gaudens, has had the potential to disrupt this sanitized account, through its association with White's scandalous death. Indeed, in 1906, when White was shot by former showgirl Evelyn Nesbit's husband, Harry Thaw, over White's earlier affair with her, the murder took place on the Garden's rooftop restaurant, literally in *Diana*'s shadow. The media frenzy following White's murder, which highlighted the sordid details of the architect's relationship with Nesbit, among other marital infidelities, prompted many of his supporters to back away and some to even openly condemn him.[24] The circumstances surrounding White's demise may have reduced scholarly interest in *Diana*, especially in the years shortly after his death.

Moreover, a discourse of aesthetic transcendence surrounding Diana has made it difficult for scholars to understand the sculpture in more historically grounded terms. As early as 1894, a critic for *The Century* identified *Diana* as "the first work of art, of purely ideal beauty, that has been presented to the daily gaze of any great number of the people of New York."[25] More recently, John Dryfhout has called *Diana* "the first generous tribute to pure beauty erected within the carless sight of busy New York."[26] The ideal in nineteenth-century art, as Bailey Van Hook explains, enjoys "a separate existence, apart from (and elevated above) what was constructed as 'realistic,' 'modern,' 'progressive,' or 'materialist.'"[27] Accordingly, art historians have tended to overlook the sculpture's place within the bustling streets of turn-of-the-century New York as well as in the lives of the men who created it.

Because of the sculpture's association with this realm of the ideal, many have also assumed that it maintains a certain distance from the "real" flesh-and-blood women who modeled for the sculpture. Preserving the separation between a model and finished work was important to Saint-Gaudens in distinguishing his own work from that of French colleagues, who tended to blur these boundaries. In fact, Homer claims in the *Reminiscences* that "in all examples of my father's ideal sculpture, little or no resemblance can be traced to any model; since he was always quick to reject the least taint of what he called 'personality' in such instances."[28] However, following the lead of recent scholars, this article challenges this insistent disassociation between Saint-Gaudens's models and his finished works of art.[29]

"Bachelors for the Night"

Located at 26th Street and Madison Avenue, at the northeast corner of Madison Square, the Garden was part of a late nineteenth-century high-end commercial network that included the city's Broadway theaters, its grand hotels and fashionable restaurants as well as elegant stores such as Tiffany's and Macy's. The Broadway theater played a particularly important role in transforming this area into an arena of elite entertainment. As early as the 1860s, the British Blondes, a burlesque dance troupe that took New York by storm with its scantily-clad performances, helped usher in a new culture of "hits, stars and spectacles."[30] By the last quarter of the century, such famous beauties as Sarah Bernhardt and Lillian Russell had turned the Broadway theater district into one of the city's major attractions.

L to R: Adolphe-William Bouguereau, *Nymphs and Satyr*, 1873. Hoffman House bar showing the installation of *Nymphs and Satyr*.

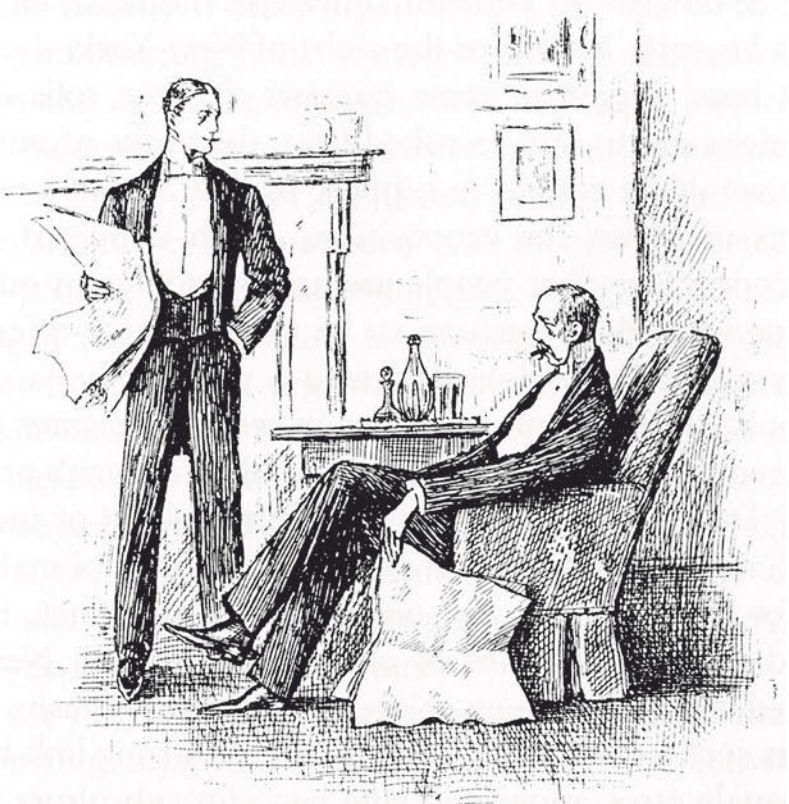
After the show, nearby restaurants, known as "lobster palaces" for their opulent interiors and expensive dinners, provided discreet settings for these male admirers, whether bachelors or married men turned "bachelors for the night," to enjoy the late-night company of Broadway actresses and showgirls.[31]

The theme of erotic temptation was also played out in area hotels. The Hoffman House bar, located near Madison Square Garden at Broadway and 25th Street, became an overnight sensation in 1882 when the owner, Edward Stokes, hung a newly-acquired painting, Adolphe-William Bouguereau's *Nymphs and Satyr* (1873), in plain view of the prominent politicians, businessmen, theater people and "sporting men" who gathered there on a daily basis.[32] Elegantly displayed beneath a red velvet canopy and lit by a crystal chandelier, the painting depicts a group of four nude nymphs coaxing a satyr into a pool of water, while a second group of female nudes looks on from a distance. The painting's mythological subject, its female nudes and its tight, invisible brushwork are representative of the type of French academic art favored by American collectors at the time. Yet this particular painting also attracted a much broader public, requiring Stokes to organize a special "ladies' day" each week to accommodate the many women who wished to view the painting.[33] Reproduced on cigar boxes, matchbook covers, plates and even bathroom tiles, *Nymphs and Satyr* was a national sensation.

By the time Stokes acquired the painting in the early 1880s, the medical neologisms "nymphomania" and "satyriasis" were recognized conditions associated with sexual excess that heightened the titillation associated with Bouguereau's subject matter.[35] Interest in the painting was also sparked by the owner's reputation; Stokes bought the painting after serving a four-year prison term for the murder of James Fisk, his rival in a love triangle ten years earlier which had scandalized New York.[36] Although the painting is not directly linked to Stokes' affair – in which Stokes was considered the predator, in contrast to the female provocateurs depicted here – the theme of sexual excess heightened the *frisson* surrounding it, signaling a novel type of sensuality that

collapsed established distinctions of culture and taste. It adds to a culture at the Hoffman House Bar that David Scobey has described as a "high-class tease" and that represents a "new kind of bourgeois public sphere in Victorian America, one that permitted forms of heterosocial pleasure and sensual spectacle that had once been out-of-bounds to respectable Americans."[37] Indeed, White and Saint-Gaudens's collaboration Madison Square Garden presented a similar dynamic by playfully pairing popular entertainment with "high-minded" classical sculpture.[38]

This period also marks a related shift in definitions of American manhood. As late-nineteenth-century men began to rethink their place in a post-Darwinian universe, animal instincts and "primitive" behaviors began to be accepted as a natural part of life. In fact, in modern-day society, which many complained was too refined and "overcivilized," it was tempting to think that a man's primal inclinations might serve as a cultural tonic, or corrective, to an urban technocratic environment. This was what prompted the psychologist G. Stanley Hall to promote boyhood as a critical life phase in which men could engage in feelings that were later lost in "our over-schooling, city-fication and spoiling," as he put it.[39] With a sufficient experience of boyhood, Hall believed, men could "inoculate" themselves against the types of stress associated with modern living and avoid enervating illnesses such as neurasthenia – or at least minimize their risk. To do so was not only a matter of self-preservation, but also an issue of survival for the Anglo-Saxon race, which, Hall argued, had grown weaker in modern times.[40] Men who reached adulthood without the opportunity to immerse themselves in boyhood could reclaim the experience by "acting like boys." As Jack London suggested in his popular 1903 novel *The Call of the Wild*, there was a wild man lurking inside of every man. In the late nineteenth century, men typically made contact with their instinctual selves by traveling out West, camping in the woods or hunting in the forest. While earlier generations of men had delighted in tales of adventure through Cooper's Leatherstocking novels, Davy Crockett's yarns or Melville's South Sea tales, modern urban men felt the need to experience such adventures themselves.[42]



AT THE CLUB.

Gay Bachelor: DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANYTHING IN THE THEORY THAT MARRIED MEN LIVE LONGER THAN UNMARRIED ONES?

Henpecked Friend (wearily): OH, I DON'T KNOW—SEEMS LONGER.

Cartoon from November 19, 1891 issue of *Life* magazine.

Cities also offered men the chance to connect with their "savage" selves through sports arenas, dance halls, bars and brothels, which often required a passage across boundaries of ethnicity, race and class. For genteel New Yorkers like Saint-Gaudens and White, private men's clubs served this purpose well, for they provided an all-male environment "where men could pursue certain pleasures held in disrepute," as the sociologist Leonard Ellis puts it, promoting the type of fraternal male bonding that Hall would have certainly approved.[43] The New York Players Club offers a case in point. Founded in 1888 by the actor Edwin Booth, the Players Club was designed as a place for men in the theater to mingle "with minds that influence the world" and to provide a retreat "from the glamour of the theatre."[44] Yet it served other purposes, too. In a collective memoir published on the Club's fiftieth anniversary, members recalled "bacchic tales" of "worshipping the Wine God" and their devotion to the "cult of Pantagruelism."[45] As member John S. Phillips put it, the club allowed men to "return to the primitive and infantile."[46] Club men, Phillips explains, "find, by experience, that they can never really grow up or become civilized. And in certain

places, such as clubs, the illusion is freely abandoned. At times they toss off the pretence of maturity, which the outer world compels them to uphold."[47] Marriage was one of the responsibilities which club life allowed men to abandon. There they could relax, drink and dine in the company of like-minded men, free from the obligations associated with marriage and family life. Not surprisingly, complaints about domestic life were a popular topic of conversation, as suggested by an 1891 *Life* cartoon. In it, two well-dressed gentlemen are shown relaxing at the club. The first asks his companion, "Do you think there is anything in the theory that married men live longer than unmarried ones?" His friend reflects a common attitude, which was likely shared by Saint-Gaudens and White, when he wearily replies, "Oh, I don't know – seems longer."[48]

The sculptor and architect were both avid club men.[49] In addition to belonging to many of the city's most distinguished men's organizations, White and his firm designed homes for several of them, including the Century Association, the Metropolitan Club and his personal favorite, the Players Club. For White, the Players Club, conveniently located near his Gramercy Park house, served as a starting point for a group of friends, including Saint-Gaudens, who called themselves the "Saturday Night Club."[50] Describing a typical night for White and his male companions, historians Paul Baker and Mark Taff explain, they met "at one of his clubs for drinks and dinner, before an evening 'on the town' with visits to the theater, to the opera, to sporting events, or, at times, to some of the haunts of the demimonde. [They] dined sumptuously, drank heavily, and smoked constantly."[51]

White and Saint-Gaudens were especially close friends. They corresponded regularly – whether across continents, when one of them traveled, or between their New York City offices – affectionately addressing one another as "my darling" and "beloved schnooks."[52] While such terms of endearment were not uncommon at the time, some of their exchanges press the boundaries of heterosexual norms. Letters filled with telling obscenities, vulgarities, and explicit sexual drawings have led scholars to suggest that one or both men probably had bisexual inclinations.[53] Of greater interest here, however, is the way in which their homoerotic banter fuelled heterosexual desire, setting the tone for their urban adventures, especially their affairs with working-class women. Following Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's understanding of homosocial relations as "those between men that are carried out through the body of a woman and that allow men to bond with each other and promote their interests at the expense of exclusion of the woman," we can see how their mistresses – and, in turn, *Diana* – allowed for homosocial bonding between them.[54]

Although White and Saint-Gaudens were both husbands and fathers, they turned to the city's working-class women to exercise their "primal instincts." In 1888, White formed the "Sewer Club" for himself and five other friends, including Saint-Gaudens and the painter Thomas Dewing. The Club supplied members with private hideaways to conduct their affairs, cryptically referred to by Dewing as "scenes of mirth and physiological interests and investigations."[55] Since the Sewer Club's activities were by definition underground and "dirty," members devised a system of "mask notes" intended to keep their affairs confidential. Dewing, for instance, once wrote White asking him to "send me any letters that come to the Players and not [to] open them. Just put them in an envelope and write 'C. A. Platt'...There are just a few letters that might come that I want to be extra careful of."[56] In another note, this time to his friend and patron Charles Freer, Dewing discussed plans for a new arrangement with Mollie Chatfield, his model and mistress: "Now Mollie thinks of changing her address. If she does she is going to write you and you are to write me a letter in the course of which you can say 'That frame maker's address is ' – so & so – ' giving the address given you."[57]

Other scattered correspondences offer further evidence of the private lives Saint-Gaudens and White enjoyed with their friends. In a letter dated February 19, 1892, to Frank Lathrop, White writes, "As usual, I will get killed when I get home. I have carried this ticket around in my pocket and forgot to write you. Won't you join us at Faust tonight? Pretty Miss Minton will be there."[58] In an undated note, the architect Thomas Hastings writes to White, "You were almighty good to take me in with such a bully crowd, and such stunning girls. It was a *grand* spree –."[59] In another, White asked James Breese, the wealthy stockbroker and noted playboy, "Why don't you dine with us at seven-thirty and go to see the sporting show and do some other sporting afterwards? I am with you tonight for anything."[60] Finally, as Saint-Gaudens's brother Louis wrote to White, "All right I will be on hand and everything will be ready and I will cover up the Newport lady so don't worry."[61]

For years, stories of these secret lives remained within a protected circle of friends. It was not until a 1962 interview that Saint-Gaudens's studio assistant Frances Grimes admitted that the sculptor was "very amorous" and "had a great many love affairs."[62] Since then, Saint-Gaudens's affair with the Swedish model Davida Clark – who posed for the Morgan tomb angels (1881), *Diana* at Madison Square Garden (1891) and the *Amor Caritas* (1898) – has been widely acknowledged. In 1889, Clark gave birth to Saint-Gaudens's second son, Louis P. Clark (known as "Novy"), whom Davida raised in Darien, Connecticut, with the sculptor's financial support. Although Saint-Gaudens's wife, Augusta, was aware of her husband's affair, like many well-to-do women at the time, she tolerated his indiscretions, even as she also disapproved of them.[63] It helped that Augusta was busy raising the couple's only child, Homer, and that her hearing problems kept her traveling in pursuit of various medical cures. These absences made it easier for Saint-Gaudens to spend time with Davida and Novy in Connecticut, where he visited them regularly until shortly before his death.

White's indiscretions are far better known, since his

affair with the Broadway showgirl Evelyn Nesbit became a national sensation following his murder in 1906. Two decades earlier, the architect and his friends had scandalized New York with what became known as the "Pie Girl Dinner." Organized to celebrate the birthday and tenth wedding anniversary of John Elliot Cowdin, the dinner consisted of an elegant twelve-course meal attended by Saint-Gaudens and dozens of prominent New York men. For the final course, the waiters presented an enormous pie, out of which Susie Johnson, a scantily dressed sixteen-year old girl, emerged with a flock of canaries. The event made headlines in Joseph Pulitzer's *World*, which accused the men of allowing their "bacchanalian revels in New York fashionable studios" to corrupt an innocent young girl.[64]

The circumstances of White's murder left his biographers to try and reconcile the architect's remarkable talent, his social prominence, and his responsibilities as a husband with the facts of his "other life." His affair with Evelyn Nesbit posed a particular challenge. Not long after the sixteen-year-old girl and her widowed mother arrived in New York City, the architect, after seeing one of Nesbit's Broadway performances, invited her and another Floradora girl to lunch at his apartment. Nesbit realized at this first meeting, as she recalls in her autobiography, "I was smaller, slenderer; a type artists and, as I learned later, older, more experienced men admired [in contrast to] the plump, big-breasted, heavy-hipped, corseted figure" often idolized at the time.[65] That same day she also enjoyed her first taste of champagne, along with the antique Italian furnishings, European oil paintings and an infamous red velvet swing decorating White's 24th Street apartment—all of which must have made quite an impression on a poor young Pittsburgh girl.[66] This setting became the backdrop against which White's relationship with Nesbit developed. As Suzannah Lessard describes an evening in the loft of White's apartment, "Stanford would dress up in a toga and put Evelyn naked on his shoulder, pick up a big bunch of grapes, and then, looking at their image in the mirrors, march around the loft singing at the top of their lungs."[67] Similarly, Nesbit recalled, "Sometimes he would set me, stark naked, on the red swing and laugh aloud with delight as he sent me soaring toward the ceiling until my bare feet crashed through the Japanese parasol."[68]

White also entertained Nesbit in the private hideaways he maintained around town, including a studio apartment in the tower of the Garden. The guests he invited to this exclusive setting included Saint-Gaudens and Breese, the actress Ethel Barrymore, the writer Mark Twain and the

Davida Johnson Clark, c. 1886

Evelyn Nesbit

lawyer Joseph H. Choate – in short, a "glittering list of the wealthy and powerful, the talented and successful," as the historian Michael Mooney has put it.[69] The apartment itself, as Nesbit describes it, looked like a scene from *Arabian Nights*: "The walls were covered with priceless medieval tapestries [and] the room was lined with gorgeous divans [which] were covered with bear, tiger and leopard skins, and rich rugs of the same skins covered the floor. Wherever possible stood magnificent, carved stone pillars reaching from floor to ceiling [and] artificial orange trees from which nestling electric bulbs, resembling oranges, shed a roseate glow over the room."[70] Even more spectacular was the view of New York. Nesbit recalled taking the tower elevator with White "to its last stop, then climb[ing] the stairs to the top of the tower. Here one reached a narrow spiral stairway leading to the feet of Diana."[71] From there, as she remembered, "I loved to climb to this high point and, holding tight onto Diana's heel, gaze out over the city. There were no tall buildings then to obscure the view....We could see in every direction...Often we would stand there for a long time, holding hands and softly talking."[72]

The Goddess of the Hunt

The image of Nesbit holding White's hand while touching *Diana*'s heel is at once vivid and ironic. While neither she nor *Diana* might have expected that the two had much in common, for White, Saint-Gaudens and their intimate friends, the connections between the Broadway dancer and the Roman goddess would have been hard to miss. For starters, both Evelyn and *Diana* were Gilded-Age celebrities in New York's entertainment culture. While Evelyn performed on Broadway, *Diana*, too, was lit up like a star. At the sculpture's unveiling in 1891, the exterior walls of the Garden were illuminated with 6,000 new Edison bulbs, the tower with 1,400 of the same, while 10 giant arc lights surrounded the sculpture itself.[73] The use of sweeping searchlights to advertise events at the Garden further turned *Diana* into what Jennifer Hardin calls a "golden and electric beacon...a sort of side-show come on: the naked electrified hook to draw crowds into the Garden."[74]

Also, *Diana* and Evelyn both exemplified a type of female beauty that distinguished them from the "voluptuous" women then popular on the stage and in paintings by French academic artists such as Bouguereau.[75] White personally preferred slender young women like Nesbit: as he once put it, "the thinner they were, the prettier they were."[76] Likewise, in art, he appreciated nudes that were "young and alluring" and was disappointed when Dewing created a painting for White's personal collection of female nudes in which the figure appeared androgynous, making it "darned hard work to tell whether it was meant for a girl or a boy," according to White.[77] Saint-Gaudens also seems to have preferred this type of young adolescent figure. One of his biographers describes Davida Clark as having a "body slender like a child's just crossing the threshold of womanhood."[78] The second, thirteen-foot version of *Diana* represents such an attenuated figure with a small bust and narrow proportions.

Saint-Gaudens chose the popular artists' model Julia "Dudie" Baird to sit for the body of the sculpture, perhaps because Davida was too busy with Novy to pose.[79] Baird modeled for many of New York's most famous artists and, like Nesbit, had also worked as a Floradora Girl on Broadway. In 1897, the *New York Herald* published "The 'Real Diana' of the Garden" in which Dudie discussed modeling for the sculpture, including a titillating account of how it felt to have a wet plaster cast molded to her body."[80] But Davida Clark is the model for the face of *Diana*, as is clear from the resemblance in the 1886 bust, *Study for a Head or First Study for the Head of Diana*, and from detailed photographs of the finished sculpture. For Saint-Gaudens and his friends, the notion that this New York City icon was based on the sculptor's secret mistress was both humorous and deeply subversive.[81]

The story of *Diana*, as a myth from Roman times, has no compelling link to the Garden's history, the site or its function. In fact, the tower's architectural source – the Spanish Giralda at the Cathedral of Seville – was crowned by an allegorical figure of Faith, carrying a palm frond, which signifies her Catholicism. It is thus tempting to see this subject matter as freely chosen at least partly for the sexual humor it evoked for Saint-Gaudens, White and their friends – a pleasure made more intense by the fact that *Diana*'s adoring fans would never have expected to find such a subtext in a public sculpture with a classical theme, especially from a pair of highly revered civic men. For the few individuals with enough inside information to appreciate the joke, it would have been amusing to see this goddess of the hunt perched upon her tower, with her bow and arrow drawn, while White and Saint-Gaudens – stags in the urban jungle – chased their virgin prey. As they claimed the virginity of the young women they seduced, *Diana* remained the goddess of purity, poised high above the din of the streets. While the public admired her chastity from afar, Saint-Gaudens, White and their Sewer Club friends thought of Davida and Evelyn, instead, as they quietly turned this American icon into a monument of playful eroticism.

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Notes

1. Miriam Berman, *Madison Square: The Park and Its Celebrated Landmarks* (Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2001), 74.
2. David Garrard Lowe, *Stanford White's New York* (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1999), 142.
3. Ibid.
4. William B. Scott and Peter M. Rutkoff, *New York Modern: The Arts and the City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1999), 11.
5. Lowe, 147.
6. Joseph Gustaitis, "The Lady of the Tower," *American History*, 34:2 (June 1999), 49.
7. Berman, 76.
8. Burke Wilkinson, *The Life and Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (New York: Dover Publications, 1985), 217.
9. A fascinating counterpoint to the story of *Diana* is the response to Frederick MacMonnies's *Bacchante and the Infant Faun* (1893), a sculpture intended for the courtyard of the Boston Public Library that was rejected by viewers who found in it the "wreckless abandon" of as "unclothed, unquiet and vile" sculpted female figure. See Chapter Two in Julia Rosenbaum, *Visions of Belonging: New England Art and the Making of American Identity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2006).
10. Comstock made many enemies in the art world over the arrest of gallery owner Alfred Knoedler in 1887 for selling photographic reproductions of painted nudes by French academic artists such as Bouguereau, Cabanel and Lefebvre. As Saint-Gaudens responded to the incident, "the decision as to the morality of a work of art should not be left to a man like Comstock." Nicola Beisel, *Imperiled Innocents: Anthony Comstock and Family Reproduction in Victorian America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Universtiy Press, 1997), 171.
11. Gustaitis, 49.
12. For an in-depth discussion of the sculpture's reception, see Chapter 4 of Jennifer Hardin, "The Nude in the Era of the New Movement in American Art: Thomas Eakins, Kenyon Cox and Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2000.
13. Hardin, 318-319.
14. The two most detailed accounts are chapters in dissertations: see Hardin, cited above, and Lois Goldreich Marcus, "Studies in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture: Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907)," Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1979. The major monograph on Saint-Gaudens is John Dryfhout *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1982). Recent exhibition catalogues include Kathryn Greenthal, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master Sculptor* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985); *Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 1848-1907: A Master of American Sculpture* (Paris: Somogy in assoc. with Musée national de la Coopération franco-américaine, Chateau de Blérancourt, 1999); Henry J. Duffy and John H. Dryfhout, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens 1848-1907: A Master of American Sculpture* (Washington D.C.: Trust for Museum Exhibitions in assoc. with the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, N.H., 1999); and Thayer Tolles, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press in assoc. with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2009). For biographies of the sculptor, see Louise Hall Tharp, *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969) and Burke Wilkinson, *Uncommon Clay: The Life and Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (New York: Dover Publications, 1985).
15. Saint-Gaudens, Homer, ed., *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (New York: Century, 1913), vol. 1, 393.
16. Ibid.
17. Joyce Karen Schiller, "The Artistic Collaboration of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White" (Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1997), 18.
18. Royal Cortissoz, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (1907; repr. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin & Co., 1913), 71.
19. Royal Cortissoz to Augustus Saint-Gaudens, October 29, 1906, Saint-Gaudens Papers, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
20. Saint-Gaudens, vol. 1, xiv.
21. Homer Saint-Gaudens to Will Low, September 26, 1907, Saint-Gaudens Papers, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
22. Editorial notes by Royal Cortissoz to Homer Saint-Gaudens on the *Reminiscences*, Saint-Gaudens Papers, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.
23. Wilkinson, xi, xii. Wilkinson also adds that before Saint-Gaudens's death, in "the spring and summer of 1906, when he was composing memoirs, his wife, Augusta; his son Homer; and his niece-in-law, Rose Nichols, were all on hand and deeply involved." (xi)
24. Saint-Gaudens never lost faith in White. Deeply shocked and saddened by his death, the sculptor was among the prominent supporters who championed the architect in print. See August 1906 letter to the editor at *Collier's Weekly* citied in Saint-Gaudens, *Reminiscences*, vol. 2, 252.
25. Hardin, 268.
26. Dryfhout, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: The Real and Ideal* (New York: Cooper Union, 1984), n.p.
27. Baily Van Hook, *Angels of Art: Women and Art in Society*, 1876-1914 (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1996), 134.
28. Saint-Gaudens, vol. 2, 332.
29. See William E. Hagans, "Saint-Gaudens, Zorn and the Goddesslike Miss Anderson," *American Art* 16, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 67-89 and Katie Mullis Kresser, "Power and Glory: Brahmin Identity and the *Shaw Memorial*," *American Art* 20, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 32-57.
30. David Scobey, "Nymphs and Satyrs: Sex and the Bourgeois Public Sphere in Victorian New York," *Winterthur Portfolio* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 56.
31. On New York City nightlife in the late nineteenth century, see Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialism of Sex, 1790-1920* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992) and Lewis A. Erenberg, *Steppin Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981). On female beauty and celebrity culture in the late nineteenth century, see Lois Banner, *American Beauty* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1983).
32. M.H. Dunlop, *Gilded City: Scandal and Sensation in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (New York: Perennial, 2000), 71.
33. Banner, 111.
34. Berman, 46.
35. Scobey, 51.
36. See Dunlop, Chapter 2.
37. Scobey, 58.
38. This contrast is further underscored by the proximity of Madison Square Garden to the *Farragut Monument* (1881), also in Madison Square, which represents their first collaborative venture.
39. Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995), 96.
40. Bederman, 94.
41. E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 229.
42. Rotundo, 228.
43. Leonard Ellis, "Men Among Men: An Exploration of All-Male Relationships in Victorian America" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1982), 355. On the notion of the club as a refuge and "home away from home" see Ellis, 363-364; Henry Wysham Lanier, ed. *The Player's Book: A Half-Century of Fact, Feeling, Fun and Folklore*, (New York, The Players, 1938); Walter Oettel, *Walter's Sketch Book of the Players* (New York: Gotham Press, 1943); G. S. Crawford, "Club Life versus Home Life" *The Arena* (August 1896): 418-431; John J. A. Becket, "Man at his Club," *Harper's Bazaar* (June 1901): 149-154; William Van Rensselaer Miller, ed. *Select Organizations in the United States* (New York: Knickerbocker Publishing, 1896); William Daniel, *My Memories of the Century Club* (New York, 1959); Junius Henri Browne, *The Great Metropolis; A Mirror of New York* (Hartford: American Publishing, 1869); and Thomas B. Clarke, *The Brook: Its Incentive, Incidents, Organizations and Progress, 1903-1930* (New York, privately printed, n.d.). As Clarke memorably put it at the end of his account of the Brook, "I turn to You all–these friends–this family–this household! No! This is not my first home, nor is it my second one! Deo Volente, this is my only home" (51).
44. Oettel, 3.
45. Lanier, 274, 30.
46. Lanier, 31.
47. Ibid.
48. On attitudes towards women at the club, see Ellis, 353-355. This is also a common theme in the primary sources on club life cited above.
49. According to White's biographer Paul Baker, the architect belonged to "more than fifty men's clubs, societies, and organizations." See *Stanny: The Gilded Life of Stanford White* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 133.
50. Baker, 138.
51. Paul L. Baker, and Mark L. Taff, "The Murder of Stanford White," *Long Island Historical Journal* 8, no. 1 (1995), 43.
52. See Homer Saint-Gaudens, "Intimate Letters of Stanford White: Correspondences with his Friend and Co-Worker Augustus Saint-Gaudens," Pts. 1, 2 and 3, *The Architectural Record* 30, no. 2 (August 1911): 107-116; no. 3 (September 1911): 283-298; no. 4 (October 1911): 399-406 as well as the Stanford White Papers at the New-York Historical Society and the Avery Library at Columbia University.
53. For instance, in one letter from Saint-Gaudens to White, the sculptor wrote, "I'm your man to dine, drink, Fuck, bugger or such, metaphorically speaking." In another to White, he filled the margins of the page with a row of thirteen erect penises. Baker 280. See also, Mosette Broderick, *Triumvirate: McKim, Mead & White; Art, Architecture, Scandal, and Class in America's Gilded Age*

(New York: Knopf, 2010).

54. Cited in Barbara Dayer Gallati, "Beauty Unmasked: Ironic Meaning in Dewing's Art," in *The Art of Thomas Wilmer Dewing: Beauty Reconfigured*, ed. Susan A. Hobbs, exh. cat. (New York: Brooklyn Museum; Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1996), 69.
55. Gallati, 68. According to Schiller, this same group of men–Stanford White, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Thomas Dewing, Francis Lathrop, George Fletcher Babb and Augustus' brother Louis Saint-Gaudens–also formed two other private clubs, the Badger-Babb Club and the Jugged Club, "whose activities were intertwined with illicit relationships, sexual exploits, and various unnamed activities. (Gallati, 37)."
56. Thomas Dewing to Stanford White, August 27, Stanford White Papers, New-York Historical Society.
57. Gallati, 68.
58. Stanford White to Frank Lathrop, February 19, 1892, Stanford White Correspondence Collection, Avery Library, Columbia University.
59. Thomas Hastings to Stanford White, February 13, Stanford White Papers, New-York Historical Society.
60. Baker, 280.
61. Louis Saint-Gaudens to Stanford White, n.d., Stanford White Correspondence Collection, Avery Library, Columbia University.
62. Wilkinson, 140.
63. In an undated letter, Saint-Gaudens tried to reason with Augusta in her response to the affair. As he put it, "The quiet dignity of Mrs. MacMonnies and Mrs. White toward the gross actions of their husbands is far finer and commands a deeper respect than any other attitude they could possibly have taken....I beg of you not to come down from the high place you hold in my heart." See Tharp, 318. According to Lawrence Wodehouse, Augusta was unaware of Davida until around 1900. White helped to keep the affair a secret when Saint-Gaudens was with Augusta in their Cornish, New Hampshire summer home by sending letters which arrived for him at the Players Club "in another envelope," as Saint-Gaudens instructed White, "without the name of your firm on it, and address it to Miss Rose Nichols, Windsor, Vermont.'" Saint-Gaudens then picked up this mail from the Windsor Post Office, which was across the Connecticut River from his Cornish home. See Wodehouse, *White of McKim, Mead & White* (New York: Garland, 1988), 207-208.
64. Baker, 250.
65. Evelyn Nesbit, *Prodigal Days: The Untold Story* (New York: Julian Messner, 1934), 27.
66. Nesbit, 26, 27
67. Suzannah Lessard, *The Architect of Desire: Beauty and Danger in the Stanford White Family* (New York: Delta, 1996), 285.
68. Lessard, 43.
69. Michael Mooney, *Evelyn Nesbit and Stanford White: Love and Death in the Gilded Age* (New York: William Morrow, 1976), 54.
70. Nesbit, 33-34.
71. Nesbit, 34.
72. Ibid.
73. Duffy and Dryfhout, 81.
74. Hardin, 309.
75. On the voluptuous woman in the nineteenth-century, see Chapter 6 in Banner.
76. Lessard, 253.
77. Baker, 245. According to Hardin, White was inspired to begin collecting nudes in response to the puritanical reactions to *Diana*. In the architect's own words, "I got so mad about the Diana business that I am going to make a collection of nudes and when I die give it to the Metropolitan Museum" (89).
78. Tharp, 249.
79. Wilkinson, 215.
80. Gallati, 66.
81. On the role of humor in Gilded-Age art and in Saint-Gaudens's *The Puritan*, specifically, see Jennifer Greenhill, *Playing it Straight: Art and Humor in the Gilded Age* (forthcoming, University of California Press).

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Rockwell Kent, portrait of the architect (Frederick Squires), frontispiece to *Architec-tonics* (1914).
All illustrations courtesy of Bowdoin College.

The Tales of Tom Thumtack, Architect

JAMES F. O'GORMAN

The two men were eventually to follow divergent paths, but for a number of years they could be found together in the drafting room atop the original Havemeyer Building at Columbia University's school of architecture as members of the class of 1904. One stayed in the arts and would become a world-famous painter and illustrator; the other eventually evolved into an inventive petroleum engineer. One was Rockwell Kent (1882-1971); the other, Frederick J. Squires (1879-1956). Together they produced an extraordinary little book, with text by Squires and illustrations by Kent, entitled *Architec-tonics: The Tales of Tom Thumtack Architect*, published in New York by William T. Comstock in 1914. Although well-known and high-priced in the rare book trade, and often mentioned in passing in studies of Kent's life and work, the publication and its author, as opposed to its illustrator, deserve to be better known.

Rockwell Kent's life and art need little introduction to many readers, although his early training in architecture often gets lost in the rush to discuss his simultaneous metamorphosis into a famous artist. While pursuing his career in art, Kent worked as a draftsman and builder off and on as he needed money well into the second decade of the century. A few of his realized houses, one of them now owned by Jamie Wyeth, all erected before 1910, stand on Monhegan Island off the coast of Maine. Indeed, there are several illustrations in the little book that capture the tall seaside cliffs of that wave-washed rock, illustrations bearing no necessary relationship to Squires's text. Kent also worked as a renderer for several New York architectural firms, among them Delano & Aldrich and Ewing & Chappell; his 1913 illustrated business announcement promised "rendering in any medium." In its July 1914 issue, near the time of publication of *Architec-tonics*, the journal *Brickbuilder* devoted one of its series of "Monographs on Architectural Renderers" to Kent. "His methods," the article says," have been unique and even without imitators. . . . [He] is as completely a master of the hard and exacting processes of black and white as he is of color."[1] Of work like that which was to appear in *Architec-tonics*, the article advised its readers that it "is worth studying with some care." But soon Kent would go on to become one of the country's most important (and sometimes controversial) painters, print makers, and book illustrators, to say nothing of his work as political agitator.[2]

Rockwell Kent, "Vaster than Man is His Works," *Architec-tonics* (1914).

Frederick Squires followed two sequential and very different careers joined only by the fertility of his mind. He graduated from Williams College in 1900, received a B.S. from Columbia in 1904, practiced architecture in New York City until 1915, and then moved to a family oil firm, Squires Brothers, before joining the Illinois State Geological Survey in 1931.[3] His New York architectural

practice, as Squires and Wynkoop (later and briefly Squires and Wendehack) lasted about a decade, until 1915, and turned out much domestic and other work, such as the Gargoyle Gate of 1906 at his alma mater, Williams College.[4] Squires's scientific bent showed up early and led to his interest in the use of concrete and hollow-tile construction to produce fireproof houses. His richly illustrated *The Hollow-Tile House* of 1913, with a few uncredited decorative line-engravings probably by Kent, is filled with photographs of his and other architects' work.[5] *The Craftsman* for June 1914 reported that the developments in the field "are set forth in graphic fashion, and in so informal, readable, and even slightly humorous way . . . [that they] hold the attention . . . of anyone who is interested in the designing and building of practical and beautiful homes."[6] These characteristics reappear in *Architec-tonics*. Squires is remembered in the Midwest for his important contributions as a petroleum engineer with the Geological Survey from 1931 to 1950. A man with a richly inventive mind, he developed various improvements for extracting oil from the ground, including flooding declining wells with water to salvage additional product. He eventually was granted 17 patents in the field.[7]

Kent briefly told of the collaboration between the pair of Columbia graduates, long after the fact, in his entertaining autobiography, *It's Me O Lord*, of 1955.[8] "Fred Squires," he wrote, was a "fair hockey player, a good pole jumper, probably a good architect, and mainly . . . a gifted writer." He wrote a series of articles for the periodical *Architecture and Building*, and asked Kent to illustrate them. "So with Fred standing over me, axe, as it were, in hand, I made the drawings. . . . It was a rush job, it had to be." Those articles and illustrations were later reissued as *Architec-tonics*, with proceeds shared equally. Later in life Kent thought he received $300 for his first recognized book illustrations (it is now more often said to have been $100).[9] The sketchiness of some of the incidental illustrations in *Architec-tonics* does suggest the haste in which they were prepared. And not all of them dovetail well with the text they adorn. Nonetheless, *Architecture and Building* declared that "nothing since the days of Cruikshank has equaled the cleverness of the illustrative sketches" – but, then, that magazine had published them in the first place (and one of them appeared in this same issue).[10]

Frederick Squires in the guise of Tom Thumtack also wrote of his association with Kent, stepping out of his fictive architect's voice and into the jargon of an unlettered office boy in the ninth tale in *Architec-tonics*, using the aliases Surry and Rocks for the illustrator. "He's a painter wid no morals to speak of . . . and de Boss [Squires] likes him becus he makes his 'own digressions from de strate an' narrer seem so triflin' by comparison.'" Surry "is a great boy fer de parties: mixed parties, mixed company an' mixed drinks." Our office boy overheard a phone call from Kent (in this fictitious account he can hear both sides), to wit: "'Come up, Tom, an' collaborate on a statue.' An de Boss would say . . . "What kind of statues have you got today, Rocks? Dat pair of big blonds agin . . .? All in good fun, of course, but this suggests that Stanford White and the "girl in the red velvet swing" was, not surprisingly, no isolated story in the architectural world of early twentieth-century New York. And Kent had already become known as a libertine.

Architec-tonics is a modest octavo of 174 pages dotted with 85 unsigned illustrations.[11] Although the title page reads "Volume One," no others appeared (perhaps because Squires soon abandoned New York architecture for Midwestern oil fields). The dust jacket promises fifteen "short snappy tales about the fellow who pushes the pencil over the drawing board," at the price of ten cents a tale, $1.50 for the lot.[12] This is indeed a book by an architect written mostly for architects, and it helps if the reader has some knowledge of the state of the practice in the early twentieth century, although the many humorous stories Squires tells to enliven his tract ought to appeal to a readership beyond the profession as well. Inside the front cover is the black-and-white rendering of a monolithic skyscraper, really the blow-up of an unarticulated *stele*, behind which races a giant nude youth. *VASTER IS MAN THAN HIS WORKS* is the inscription, one that would seem to put architecture in its proper place.

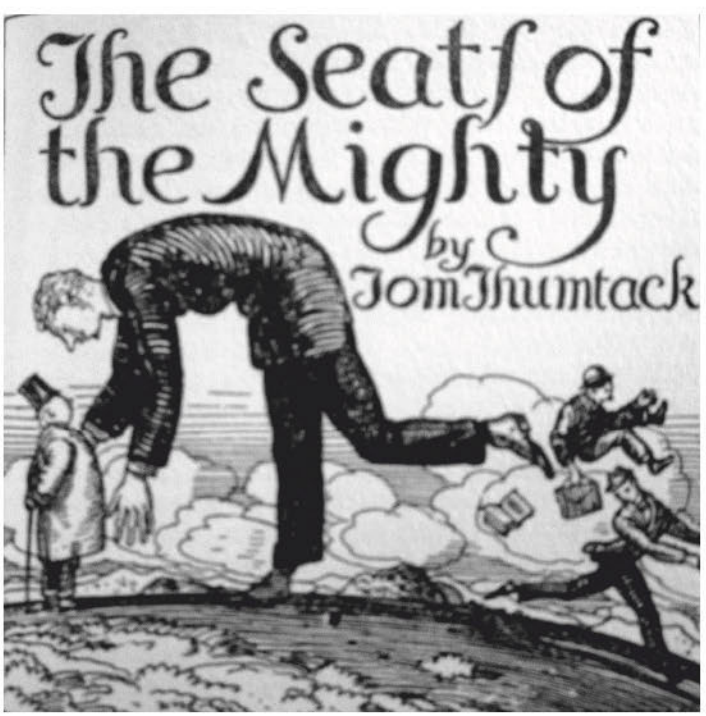
The books embossed cover is extraordinary in the history of depictions of the genre of architecture and of architects. Although the figure is set against a dark blue background rather than a black one, the image brings to mind Greek red-figure vase painting (Kent noted his early interest in classical archaeology in his autobiography).[13] A flat, nude, ruddy-skinned youth pinwheel-dances at night high above earth's waters, bending a golden T-square across his right knee. Above him rises a circle of stars, Saturn, and a crescent moon. This is Kent's first use of the flying figure, a motif he was to repeat in various guises throughout his life. The scene recalls the flight of Icarus, whose lofty ambitions outweighed his abilities and led to his fall, a caution to the architect perhaps, while the bent T-square (bent in an attempt to break it?) may allude to Kent's as well as Squire's eminent abandoning of the profession. Or it might suggest the bent vision of the practice of architecture and the business of building that marks Squires's presentation. In his own enigmatic way, Kent here set the right tone for what we are to find in the tales. With two exceptions, the rest of the illustrations are chapter head- and tail-pieces, historiated initials, and small sketches in black and white.[14]

Neither author nor illustrator is mentioned in the book, although the author's name does appear on the inner flap of the dust jacket where we find an ad for his *Hollow Tile House*. The full-length, full-color frontispiece, however, is obviously a caricature of Squires, also known as Tom Thumtack AIA. He is formally attired in vest, jacket, stripped pants, cravat, and spats. A lanky, mustachioed fellow, "thin, aesthetic, supersensitive and over-trained" as Squires describes an architect elsewhere in the text, he stands holding a roll of drawings. "I've drawn lines, and I've hired line-makers," he tells us. For a watch fob he has

a miniature pair of draftsman's wing-dividers. He poses between the tasseled tiebacks of a draped window through which we see a temple-crowned hill more or less based on the Acropolis at Athens, an image of all that was holy in the drafting rooms of the day. In those rooms worked the "narrow-gauged scholastic who lives and breathes the Five Orders of Vignola," as the text puts it elsewhere.[15] The preface ends with a tail piece, a sketchy depiction of the same lanky fellow asleep in bed, his drawing board, T-square, and pen abandoned at his feet, dreaming of the monuments of the classical past.

The amusing architect's "portrait" signals that this is no heady treatise. So does the hyphen between the first c and the second t of the title, *Architec-tonics*. Without it (and it has often been carelessly cited without it[16]) we would expect a sober treatise on architectonics, which, according to the dictionary, would be a discussion of "the doctrine of pure method or of abstract systemization of knowledge." Thankfully, we have in hand no such thing. A few pages beyond the "portrait" the author tells us that "'smile' is one of the very tonics old Doctor Thumtack prescribes for the throat of art which is so very, very long, and dry as a covered bridge." Here we will find "just tonics for architects, architec-tonics." They are wry tales "meant to fill the gap in the field of written entertainment." This is the kind of thing that played in the drafting rooms of the era. Amusing anecdotes, some punning, some dialect, some low humor, and a limerick punctuate the chapters, but that smile masks a seriousness of intent. In each "tonic" that follows, which will usually bring a chuckle, if one often accompanied by a groan, the author takes on some aspect of architectural practice: clients, building on the wrong lot, competitions, specifications, contractors, speculative builders, what we now call façadism, advertising, and much more, all accompanied by Kent's scratchy illustrations. "There is humor and fun and pathos" here, wrote the reviewer for *Architecture and Building*.[17]

Architec-tonics is meant to amuse, but it must also be read as a personal commentary on the state of the country's architectural practice at the turn of the twentieth century. The profession in the United States had developed during the previous century in part under the watchful eye of the American Institute of Architects. As with any such organization, the AIA sought to control the profession, to regulate admission, fees, competitions, publicity, licensing, and so on. The Institute is never mentioned in the text (although it is in the caption to the portrait of Thumtack), but many of these subjects are discussed from Squires's squint-eyed, often quotable position. Take specification writing: "The perfect specification would be the essence of three lectures to a visitor from Mars on 'How to Properly Construct a House,' by an earnest artist, a careful builder, and a shrewd attorney." Earnest, careful, and shrewd: an essential description of that verbal product of the architect's office, "the essence of things hoped for, the images of things not seen." As for the perfect specification writer, he "should have graduated from Columbia Law School and Drummond's Detective Agency and then taken a course in palmistry to cover unforeseen contingencies." Take the contractor: "His mind is the melting-pot for weather, human nature, estimating, strikes, prices, panics, tariffs, floods, wrecks, owners, architects, banks, delays, materials, subs [sub-contractors], plans and past performances." Take architect-client relations: "Architecture would be a fine profession if it were not for clients," who damn architects as impractical but are not the proper judges of architectural matters, he says, grousing through a chapter-long "plea" cast as a court case pitting the two as adversaries. Thumtack uses a later chapter, entitled "Pot-Pouri," to demonstrate the folly of acquiescing to the demands of the client. The result is a house put together eclectically of mismatched bits from the history of styles: Gothic, Richardsonian, and Greek. It appeared as an "architectural aberration" of the kind that had been damned for some time in professional magazines such as the *Architectural Record* as Victorian picturesque eclecticism waned and calm classicism came to dominate the period. But Thumtack is after the architect, not the building per se. The assembler of this pastiche, Harold Lesser by name, will not stand his ground, gives into the pressure of fat, money-stuffed philistines, is, in this telling, weak-kneed, groveling, without convictions, and ultimately lost. In him Squires created a precursor to Peter Keating in Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*.



Rockwell Kent, "The Seats of the Mighty," *Architec-tonics*, (1914).

Or take Thumtack on the AIA's canon of ethics regarding another aspect of architect-client relations: advertising. This, it decreed, was unprofessional and

hence forbidden. This attitude leads to corruption, says our author, for, despite the rule, an architect by hook or by crook usually manages to get his name attached to pictures of his buildings in the daily press and the trade magazines. Or he holds down his end of a partnership by cultivating a circle of potential clients, by the "number of real-big-ones who let him buy the drinks." But this is not condemned by the AIA as advertising. "Since complimenting Miss Trulie Awful on her looks just before her stepbrother, O. Awful Rich, selects an architect is not condemned [by the AIA], it must be . . . far better than any form of *advertising*," he sneers. Although such examples are written as caricatures, Squires's aim is serious. The rule has become obsolete. "The faster pace of modern business requires a readier channel between the man who buys and the man who sells, between the client and the architect." But the public "doesn't know what architecture is or what an architect looks like or where his duties start and where they stop." Thumtack's usual sardonic tone is abandoned here as he champions advertisement as a form of education, and it is "*Professional to Educate*," he roars. In this, Squires seems to have led by a few years the increased questioning of the AIA's aversion to advertising that was to lead eventually to "breaking the taboo" against it.[18]

Oddly enough for an architect, he says in "The Wreckers" that the most fascinating thing about building is demolition." He then spends an entire chapter of stories in which he admits to having torn down "lots of buildings . . . and . . . unearthed romance, history, crime, treasure, ghosts, skeletons, tin-cans and dead cats." He is far from sentimental about them, however, far from being a preservationist, since he believes old walls "are but receivers and it has not been given them to transmit again to us the history they have heard." In following years such an attitude would slowly begin to appear quaint, as William Sumner Appleton founded the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities in 1910, and the rush to restoration of the 1920s would to lead to the creation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949.

In the "tonic" ironically called "Seats of the Mighty,"[19] Thumtack discourses on the architect who refuses to learn "new things . . . [even though,] when a vitally interested expert [i.e. a supplier of methods and materials] will tell him all about it [a new product,] . . . it's the quickest way to get a strangle hold on a new idea." An experiment demonstrates that in most offices the client is embraced, the supplier is shooed away. Kent's headpiece is faintly surreal, but characteristically clever. What one takes in this context to be an architect, although not identified as such, is shown as a giant who bends awkwardly to embrace a much smaller plutocrat who is obviously a client, while he kicks away other men, also diminutive, and sends sales catalog and specimen case flying. In architectural offices of his day, Thumtack complains, the rush for business trumped the pursuit of education.

Then there is this concerning "the dramatic hours of architecture": after drawings are finished and bids are in, "then come tingling, nerve-tense situations calling for swift decisions. For the first time, the building trinity of architect, owner and contractor is ready to be united." The owner wants the lowest price, the contractor wants to beat out competitors, and the architect wants a price within the estimate he gave the owner. He wants the get his building built, and to do that he must be nimble in his thinking, calculation, and revisions. "To redesign a building in five minutes and be able to stake on it a hard-won architectural reputation, that takes real mastery." And the skill of a detective in the scrutiny of contracts. What he means here is that it is easy to sit at a drafting board and create dream castles, difficult to enter the real world to get them built. The percentage of an architect's time spent at a drafting board (or now, a computer) is minimal compared to time spent in meetings with planners, suppliers, bankers, clients, lawyers, contractors, sub-contractors, builders, politicians, housewives, and on and on. Yet in Thumtack's time, the schools devoted overwhelmingly more time to design, as they still do.

In "The Genius," the last of his "tonics," Squires tells of one "Jack Charette,"[20] a brilliant but procrastinating designer and draftsman who fell under the spell of the goddess Inertia and her relative John Barleycorn, who once "waked up along [sic] enough to win a fellowship" at the American Academy in Rome, who upon return and again in his cups and working for Thumtack, tried to kite a check and, under pressure of jail, pulled himself together to become "one of that splendid group of western progressives who are doing so much to balance architectural accomplishment across the Mississippi." There have always been any number of drunks within the army of architectural draftsmen, and Squires is here certainly building a composite, but there was one famous draftsman from the period who this story recalls. Harvey Ellis (1852-1904), a somewhat shadowy figure who never worked for Squires as far as I know but was famed in his day as a vagrant "genius," worked in Rochester then moved to Minneapolis and Missouri. He seems to have visited Europe if not the American Academy, and his brilliance as an architectural draftsman was legendary. So was his drinking: he boozed constantly, saying himself that he had been "preserved in alcohol for twenty years" before quitting as the excess of drink eroded his talent and shortened his life. Ellis in his time was the subject of drafting room gossip East and West, and with his Midwest connections Squires could have known of him. Ellis indeed ghosted the design of some of that region's more progressive buildings.[21] Kent's headpiece here shows Charette shakily supported by his two companions, all nude, staggering arm in arm away from the viewer across a cloud above the ruins of the Colosseum and other fragments of Roman antiquity. He may have drawn inspiration for his swaying trio from depictions of Silenus, the Greek symbol of drunkenness, who was shown in later art supported by two companions, in his case a satyr and a faun, although Kent dramatically reoriented the group.[22] Only he could illustrate this tonic in such a cracked version of the classical tradition.

If it were a novel *Architec-tonics* would be called a roman à clef, for its every seriocomic "tonic" is keyed to the contemporary architectural scene at the beginning of the twentieth century. Yet scholarship has still to mine this little gem for all it reveals from one keen if skeptical observer's point of view about the state of the profession at the time. Although Rockwell Kent is well known, Thumtack, and his joking ventriloquist manipulator Frederick Squires, have yet to be given their due.

This article is dedicated to the memory of Guy Lacy Schless and Nancy Halverson Schless.

Notes

1. *Brickbuilder* 23 (July 1914), 167-69. In *Brickbuilder* 24 (January 1915), 23-24, Kent illustrated George S. Chapell's caricatures of architectural styles.
2. David Traxel, *An American Saga: The Life and Times of Rockwell Kent*, New York: Harper & Row, 1980, passim.
3. For a brief biography of Squires see http://isgs.illinois.edu/about-isgs/heritage/squires.shtml.
4. Whitney S. Stoddard, *Reflections on the Architecture of Williams College*, Williamstown: Williams College, 2001, 197.
5. Frederick Squires, *The Hollow-Tile House*, New York: William T. Comstock Co., 1913. The contents originally appeared in *Architecture and Building*. See also Frederick Squires, "Fireproof Houses," *The American Architect* (August 11, 1909), 53-55.
6. *The Craftsman* XXVI (June 1914), 354. See also Frederick Squires, "Why the Bungalow," *Country Life in America* 26 (September 1914), 35-37.
7. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 8, 1942, 32; *Science News Letter* 60 (August 4, 1951), 72 and (October 13, 1951), 234.
8. Rockwell Kent, *It's Me O Lord*, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1955, 277.
9. A few contemporary letters between Kent and Squires are in the Archives of American Art: Catherine Stover and Lisa Lynch, *A Finding Aid to the Rockwell Kent Papers*, Washington. D.C., 1998, 162.
10. *Architect and Building* (July 1914), 18.
11. I am indebted to the late David Becker, Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., and Andrew Alpern for criticism and encouragement.
12. It was recently listed by one bookseller for $1800.
13. *It's Me O Lord*, 66.
14. The original sketches for some of these are in the collections of the Walker Art Museum at Bowdoin College and the Plattesburg Museum of Art.
15. Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola's *Regole delli cinque ordini d'architettura* was a how-to bible on the rules of classicism (albeit Roman rather than Greek) by the celebrated Renaissance master. In translation it was the favorite source for the classical orders in America's Renaissance Revival era. As I have shown in another place, heroic full-length portraits of architects began to appear around the turn of the twentieth century in this country (I think especially of Sargent's Richard Morris Hunt of 1895 at Biltmore), and Kent here may be making sly allusion to the practice. James F. O'Gorman, "Instruments, Architects, and Portraits," *Catalogue of the Andrew Alpern Collection of Drawing Instruments at the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library*, New York: Columbia University, 2010, xi-xvii.
16. For example in Traxel, *An American Saga*, 81 and 243.
17. See note 10.
18. See Andrew M. Shanken, "Breaking the Taboo: Architects and Advertising in Depression and War," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69 (September 2010), 406-29.
19. A title that may have been suggested by Gilbert Parker's *The Seats of the Mighty* of 1896, a popular historical romance.
20. *Charrette* [sic], a French word meaning "hand cart," was used in the drafting rooms of the period to mean the last, frenzied drive to finish design drawings that were then carried by cart to be presented to critic or client.
21. Roger G. Kennedy, "The Long Shadow of Harvey Ellis," *Minnesota History* 40 (Fall 1966), 97-108, or Roger G. Kennedy, "Reconsidering an Elusive American Genius," *Architectural Digest* (October 1990), 32-44.
22. See Christoffel Jegher's woodcut after Rubens of *The Drunken Silenus*, ca. 1635. If Kent did have this kind of thing in mind, he loosened the composition of the group and turned it from full frontal to rear view.

In Memoriam GUY LACY SCHLESS (1929-2011)

Guy Lacy Schless, who died in February, was one of the most striking and beloved figures of the Victorian Society in America. A prominent physician with an extensive practice, he gave unstintingly of his time to the society, which he served as president from 1984 to 1990.

After graduating from Penn Charter in 1947, Guy studied at Stanford University where he became the captain of its fencing team. After graduating in 1951, he decided to return to Philadelphia, where he enrolled at Jefferson Medical College. Specializing in endocrinology, he became an expert on diabetes and other metabolic diseases. Upon completion of his medical training, he served in the United States Navy, where he held the rank of lieutenant commander. In 1959-1960, he spent eighteen months as a visiting fellow at Guy's Hospital in London, which changed the course of his career. For the next thirty-five years, he would return every summer to the hospital as a visiting consultant, and was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine.

Besides his professional accomplishments, Guy was also broadly cultured. Archaeology was a particular interest, and as an undergraduate he participated in an archaeological excavation in Sicily. During the long flight – while on a refueling stop in Iceland – he met Nancy Halverson, a Wellesley student travelling to study in France. They married in 1952. Nancy opened his eyes to the world of nineteenth-century architecture, which they explored during their summer stays in Europe. This early interest would later blossom in their work for the Victorian Society. Nancy's death in 2002 did much to take wind out of Guy's sails. Nonetheless, he remained on the staff of Pennsylvania Hospital, in practice to the end.

All who met Guy Schless were instantly struck by his great vitality and good humor, which made themselves felt in his twinkling eyes, infectious sharp laugh, and utter lack of pretense. The Victorian Society in America feels his loss keenly.

Requiescat in pace.

– Michael J. Lewis

Flirtation Room at Ten Chimneys. Kate Roth Photography.

Victorian Revival in Wisconsin

Neo-Rococo Surrealism at Ten Chimneys

KEITH D. MACKAY

In 1914, Milwaukee native and budding actor Alfred Lunt (1892-1977) purchased the first three Wisconsin acres of what would grow into a major landholding. After his marriage to British actress Lynn Fontanne (1887-1983) and the addition of some three hundred additional acres, the estate they called Ten Chimneys became not only their summer retreat but an ideal setting for entertaining the greats of the American theatrical world.

The main house at Ten Chimneys was unique in the region, and it would have been extraordinary anywhere, for it was furnished not in one of the styles then the rage – the popular and ever-tasteful "Colonial" style or its sophisticated alternative, the Moderne – but rather in a creative version of the Victorian Revival. In one of the early Lunt–Fontanne collaborations, Noël Coward's *Design for Living* (1932), the characters may have deceived, seduced, and outwitted one another on a stage of cosmopolitan modernity – white walls of Syrie Maugham sophistication and streamlined furniture by Gilbert Rohde. But it was a dramatically different world the Lunts would craft for themselves at Ten Chimneys.

Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne soon became two of the most respected and revered stage-actors of the twentieth century, famous for their performances of classics like Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* (1935) and Chekhov's *The Sea Gull* (1938), as well as works of more current social and artistic import such as Robert Sherwood's *There Shall Be No Night* (1943) and Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *The Visit* (1958). But it was their interpretations of sophisticated comedies of manners that became their stock in trade. The theater-going public never seemed to tire of these. Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne became household names – and wealthy.

Nearly every summer the Lunts returned to Ten Chimneys to rest, rejuvenate and rehearse their next play. Here they welcomed friends such as Noël Coward, Thornton Wilder, Helen Hayes, Katherine Hepburn, Laurence Olivier, Cecil Beaton, and Joan Crawford. This was the pattern of their lives: summers in Wisconsin, winters in New York, spring and fall touring in repertoire until their retirement in 1960 when they were able to take up full-time residence at Ten Chimneys until Alfred's death in 1977 and Lynn's in 1983.

Garden Terrace Room at Ten Chimneys. Photo by Amanda E. Shilling.

After Lynn Fontanne's death the estate was cared for by Alfred's brother-in-law George Bugbee, who kept everything as it had been until his death in the mid-1990s. After Bugbee's death the future of the estate was tenuous. Representatives from auction houses visited. Developers were attracted by its rolling hillsides and proximity to Milwaukee. Roofs began to leak and the gardens were overgrown. Fearing the destruction of Ten Chimneys, Joseph Garton of Madison, Wisconsin, purchased it and its contents from Alfred Lunt's niece in 1996 and formed the Ten Chimneys Foundation to restore and preserve the

estate as a world-class house museum and resource for theatre and the arts.

Ten Chimneys is the confident expression of the personal tastes and ideals of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. Every detail was thoughtfully considered to achieve just the right effect: 'The Lunts feeling for their home at Genesee amounts to a passion. No effort is too much to make it more beautiful. No pains too great. Every corner, every mirror, chair, window, stairway is cherished and perfected," enthused *Vogue*.[1] For the decoration of the house the Lunts turned to their close friend and artist/set designer Claggett Wilson. They had known Wilson for years, working together in the theater, so it was natural enough for them to continue their creative collaboration offstage. After devoting two years to creating the interiors of Ten Chimneys, Wilson described the finished rooms as "Neo-Rococo Surrealism."[2] Five of the principal entertaining rooms they created – the entrance hall, the Terrace Room, the Flirtation Room, the drawing room, the Belasco Room, and the master bedroom – were imbued with a Victorian Revival sensibility.

The Lunts were participants in the international reassessment of the picturesque styles of mid-nineteenth century that occurred during the 1930s and 1940s as a counter-aesthetic to modernism. "I think," Lynn Fontanne told *Vogue* in 1946, "living in a modern house all the rest of my life would be just like sitting nude forever in the center of a huge white dinner plate."[3] Their version of the Victorian Revival was marked by a sense of humor, an almost postmodernist manipulation of the essence of Victoriana, translated with a contemporary sensibility. At a time when streamlined modernism and sparse colonial revival defined good taste, the Victorian Revival embraced the style's otherness, its lack of conformity, its whiff – to a use a term popular at the time – of degeneracy. To love the Victorian was an act of rebelliousness and an expression of confidence. Several of the style's chief proponents, Charles de Bestigui, Cecil Beaton, Helena Rubenstein, Millicent Rogers, Madeleine Castaing, and the Lunts – not a wallflower among them – created Victorian Revival interiors.[4] But of these interiors only those created by the Lunts have survived.

Main House Entry Hall. Photo by Amanda E. Shilling.

Entering through the nondescript front door, visitors are completely unprepared for the spectacle of sweeping stair, marble floor, crystal chandelier, and whimsical murals assembled within the intimately scaled space. "Should it be surprising that total actors live in total enchantment? This house is a surprise at every turn," wrote one visitor.[5] The entrance-way décor is inspired by Swedish manor houses but is interpreted with modern playfulness. Over-scaled scrolled sconces and a gilded Louis XIV style stool upholstered in coral silk and heavy fringe reflect the Swedish aristocracy's taste for the French Baroque. A magnificent Second Empire Sèvres guéridon and an early nineteenth-century Swedish tile stove complete the ensemble.

The Lunts designed their home's grand entrance around the Sèvres table. It is extraordinarily theatrical and executed with expert craftsmanship, with hand-painted depictions of parrots and flowers on its top and fine detailed bronze gilt mounts on the base. This porcelain table was designed by Louis Pierre Schilt, whose intensive study of botany is evident in the accurate depiction of the camellias, lilacs and other flowers. The table was commissioned by the Empress Eugénie of France in 1853 as a gift to the Scottish Marchioness of Eglinton. Presumably the Lunts acquired this table sometime soon after the Eglinton House sale in Scotland in 1925.[6] Above the table hangs a portrait of the ill-fated Princess Charlotte of Wales (whose death in 1817 helped pave Queen Victoria's path to the throne) with Tudor roses in her hair by an unknown artist.

The Drawing Room. Michael David Rose Photography.

Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne in the Drawing Room.
Warren O'Brien, from O'Brien Family Collection at the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Positioned at the far end of the entrance hall is a monumental Swedish ceramic tile stove, one of two purchased in Stockholm in 1939 and shipped to Ten Chimneys. Alfred writes from Hanko, Finland, on August 2, 1938, to his architect Charles "Carl" Dornbursch, "I think I shall buy an *old* tile stove (there are two that entrance us) but where will you put it I don't know – anyway I think I will get it regardless – they are rare these days and so beautiful – colored tile, you know."[7] Fuel efficient, clean, and a steady heat source, ceramic stoves were an innovation in heating houses in northern European countries. These ranged in quality from fine porcelain for the grandest homes to the earthenware example used in rural manors such as we have at Ten Chimneys. Each tile of the stove is decorated with garlanded classical urns around which are sheaves of wheat, a sickle, a scythe, and a rake. A taste for historic ceramic stoves was encouraged in the early twentieth century by the decorator Elsie de Wolfe who used them in numerous commissions, declaring in *The House in Good Taste* that ceramic stoves gave hallways "distinction" and "are admirable heating difficult rooms – outdoor porches and draughty halls."[8] Claggett Wilson painted *trompe-l'oeil* drapery and a proscenium arch around the stove.

Surrounding the stove and extending throughout the entrance hall is a mural by Wilson depicting a cadre of courtiers and servants greeting guests to Ten Chimneys. This recalls late eighteenth-century Swedish manor houses decorated with figural murals such as the cavaliers at Sandemar and the grenadiers in the manor house of von Ekstedska. A dashing couple located near the front door hospitably proffer claret and a pineapple, the gentleman, in the red high-heeled shoes made popular by Louis XIV. The central section of the mural is dominated by a second cavalier couple who proudly present the evening's fare: pheasant, hare and a molded jelly dessert. A maid is depicted with an armful of linens, a saucy look, and the keys to the guest's room walking toward the foot of the grand staircase. Across the hall from her is a second maid carrying a silver urn of hot water outside the door of the Terrace Room, as if to lead the way to this popular location for afternoon coffee and tea.

The Terrace Room interior was not an attempt to recreate a period interior, but to combine historic and contemporary pieces within a comfortable country house setting. English rose chintz slipcovers and naïve nineteenth-century paintings of landscapes and hunt scenes based on prints contribute to the atmosphere. Five large floor-to-ceiling windows open onto a stone terrace allowing a casual movement of people – and dogs – in and out of doors. The flow between the interior and the garden is enhanced by the use of Pennsylvania bluestone pavers from the terrace for the flooring of the Terrace Room. Planted with white lilacs, pink

germaniums, hibiscus bushes, and peonies, the terrace offers a pleasant view of the rolling kettle moraine landscape.

The Terrace Room is furnished with objects in the Regency, Empire and Biedermeier styles, casually arranged and easily repositioned around the room as desired. A Biedermeier tea table with a remarkable cluster-columned pedestal base painted with imitation inlay sets the tone. Other Biedermeier pieces include a tall case clock, a worktable, and four side chairs. A Grecian sofa in the American Empire Revival style dominates one wall above which hangs a French Empire mirror with a gilded frame decorated with classical anthemia, laurel leaves, and a single uppercase *N* surmounted by an Imperial crown, identifying it as possibly from court of Napoleon, a provenance the Lunts would have appreciated. As a rule the couple appreciated a piece's theatrical effect over it's provenance, as evidenced by their use of a voluptuous mermaid table and two five-foot-tall wooden Indian maidens as plant stands, with something of a cigar store advertisement about them.

The Victorian Revival atmosphere here was further enhanced by the use of a large colorful folding screen. Friend and fellow actor Richard Whorf painted the screen to replicate the appearance of nineteenth-century scenic wallpaper panels in rich and saturated colors. It shows a caravan of *commedia dell'arte* actors cavorting in the Italian countryside under romantic ruins similar to Dufours *Vues d'Italie* scenic wallpaper of c. 1830[10] Whorf enhances the illusion by including an actual wallpaper border and a painted faux-marble wainscot like those typically used in nineteenth-century wallpaper-decorated folding screens. The display of a coffee service of Old Paris porcelain, c. 1850, painted with scenes of Italianate villas continues the Roman *campagna* theme of the screen.

The most overtly Victorian Revival interior at Ten Chimneys is the Flirtation Room, located on the second floor off of the grand staircase. This location may have inspired its Second Empire décor evocative of a Parisian townhouse parlor. Claggett Wilson's tricks learned from a career of stage design are everywhere. The walls are hung with Rococo Revival columned wallpaper, originally with a yellow background, which Lynn Fontanne disliked – so she had it meticulously painted coral by Claggett Wilson's assistant John Hale (wherever the wallpaper was covered the coral paint ends and the original yellow pattern remains).[11] Four mid-nineteenth-century gas light fixtures with brass putti holding richly etched glass globes and crystal drops add drama. Silk drapes and lace curtains pulled back over French doors are in keeping with the picturesque abundance of the room.

The button-tufted and fringed Second Empire settee and side chairs anchor the Flirtation Room's composition. Upholstered in velvet, they are a testament to the craft of the nineteenth-century upholsterer with their exuberant *passementerie*. Before the settee is a finely carved Rococo Revival style center table with a black marble top. A pair of c.1850 papier-mâché side chairs is inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and a remarkable Regency style worktable painted black and decorated with painted gilt flowers and anthemia serves as an end table to hold an ornate brass gas lamp. The lacquered and inlaid furniture sparkles in the evening.

The nineteenth-century theme is evident in even the smallest detail. A richly beaded and embroidered bumper or hearth bench is placed before a never-used Rococo Revival cast iron stove. Two matching bookcases house century leather bound books including the 1793 edition of David Hume's *History of England*, A. W. Kinglake's multi-volume treatise on *The Invasion of the Crimea*, works by Alexandre Dumas, Guy de Maupassant, Johann Goethe, Washington Irving, and, essential reading for all well educated Victorians, John Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* and *Modern Painters*.

On top of the bookcases the Lunt's artfully arranged nineteenth-century English ceramic figures including a pair representing the *Holy Family's Flight into Egypt* and the *Holy Family's Return* is matched with the paired *The Sailor's Departure* and *The Sailors Return* (c. 1840). Claggett Wilson published an article titled *Jack Afloat and Susan Ashore* on the popular representation of the "romantic seafarer and his modest sweetheart in tearful farewell and joyous reunion" in the July 1942 issue of *Antiques*.[12] Two portraits of unknown red-coated English officers by Aaron Edwin Penley in handsome Regency style frames hang over the sofa. Penley was a distinguished early Victorian artist honored as one of the painters for King William IV, a royal connection the Lunts would have appreciated. The intent here was never an academic recreation of a mid-nineteenth century parlor, but only to create a romantic "historic" atmosphere.

The Flirtation Room may have served as the inspiration for Noël Coward's play *Quadrille*. In 1951 the playwright paid one of his many visits to Ten Chimneys and, after an inspired conversation about nineteenth-century novelists, he, Alfred, and Lynn created the outline for a play set in the Gilded Age about a wealthy divorced couple who unexpectedly, and inconveniently, fall in love with each other all over again. The stage set for *Quadrille* even incorporated familiar elements, like the mother-of-pearl balloon-back side chairs in the Flirtation Room.[13] The play, though panned by critics and not a huge commercial success, was popular with Lunt fans, and Alfred was delighted to win the Tony Award that season for his performance in it.

The drawing room's soigné décor is achieved through the picturesque layering of objects of varying quality and age. A heady mix of Rococo-Revival, Directoire, Empire, and Napoleon III furniture creates the effect of a long established country house with objects accumulated by a family over many years. "We don't want," Alfred stated, "a house that looks like it has been decorated, but one that seems to have been lived in for years."[14]

On the wall beneath an Adam style pier mirror is a luxuriously upholstered banquette of sapphire blue tufted upholstery with gold gimp and fringe in high Victorian Revival fashion. Such banquettes were frequently used in interiors designed by Charles de Beistegui, Syrie

Maugham, Madeleine Castaing, and Cecil Beaton. Two gilded dolphin end tables are on either side of an American Empire Grecian-style sofa upholstered in sapphire blue. Before the sofa is a black marble-topped conservatory table with a pedestal base inlayed with anthemia bearing the stamp of François-Honoré-Georges Jacob-Desmalter.

Center stage in the furnishing scheme of the Drawing Room is a Rococo Revival parlor suite that had originally graced the Milwaukee townhouse of Alfred's parents. It is attributed to the Mathews Brothers, furniture manufacturers in Milwaukee from 1857 to 1937, but it could have been made by any number of Midwestern furniture manufacturers. Two gilded blackamoors on either side of the fireplace add a touch of 1930s chic to the room.

A grand piano has pride of place in the drawing room. Here the songs of Coward, Gershwin, and Rodgers and Hammerstein were played when guests assembled after dinner. The Steinway was painted by Claggett Wilson; when closed the piano displays its cream- and gold-colored body with grisaille *chinoiserie* figures and interlacing *A* and *L* for Alfred and Lynn. When the lid is lifted, we get "the climactic effect" praised by a *Town & Country* reporter noted in 1940; the underside of the lid "is painted a clear vermilion, with Orpheus, framed in gold scrolls, charming the jungle, under a blue sky. Jealous females plot his destruction in the environs."[15]

Coordinated with the piano is a pair of English mid-nineteenth-century ceramic biscuit figures after a model by French sculptor Carrier-Belleuse that Claggett Wilson partially gilded and converted into lamps.[16] The figures represent *Diana*, with bow and quiver of arrows, and *Ceres*, with sickle and sheath of wheat. Representations of Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, appear elsewhere at Ten Chimneys; the Lunts were always careful to cultivate the image of Ten Chimneys as a working farm in both their publicity and décor.

The highlight of the room is an extraordinary mural depicting events from the Old Testament. In the 1946 *Vogue* article titled *Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt, of Genesee, Wisconsin*, Ward Morehouse wrote, "The living-room [drawing room] is a re-creation of something they saw in a book of old Swedish manor houses." The design source is *Svenska Kulturbilder*, a multi-volume series on the history of Swedish culture published in 1930 and owned by the Lunts. It included a chapter on a manor house called Bratesgarden in the town of Brafors, Sweden, with its distinctive mural.[17] In order to accommodate the mural, the Lunts' drawing room's architecture duplicates that of the room at Bratesgarden; even the wooden plank ceiling was replicated. The mural's colors are light and airy tones of blue, yellow, and orange. The stylized trees and pavilion-style architecture that appear so modern in their tongue-in-cheek playfulness are actually replicated from the late eighteenth-century design source, as are the nonchalant manner in which the clouds and smoke of the various scenes drift up onto the plank ceiling. But there are significant differences between the Swedish mural and the one at Ten Chimneys; scenes were edited and shuffled around to please. For example, the *Last Supper* that takes the primary place in the original is not included here. Claggett Wilson moved *Elijah Ascending Into Heaven* from its corner location at Brafors to a more significant location in the center of the room. With characteristic aplomb the scene is painted directly above the hearth, as if Elijah's chariot of fire has emerged roaring out of the fire below; the Lunts knew good theater. Scenes not found in the original, such as the saucy *Samson and Delilah*, the demure *Rebecca at the Well*, and a whimsical giraffe were the creative choices made by Wilson and the Lunts, who adapted the Swedish mural to fit their own taste and humor.

Belasco Room. Michael David Rose Photography.

A sense of whimsy continues in the small hall called the Tinsel Print Room. Here, appropriately enough, the Lunts displayed their impressive collection of Regency era tinsel prints. A convergence of craft and celebrity, prints of popular actors could be purchased and then hand-colored and decorated with foil, paper, cloth, and, yes, tinsel. At Ten Chimneys the collection is displayed together, creating a portrait gallery of the great actors of the nineteenth century. The room functions as an antechamber to the Belasco Room.

The Belasco room was a favorite of Lynn's. A sense of intimacy is created with furnishings appropriate for a lady's boudoir: a day bed and chaise longue, numerous footstools and mirrors. The room started out life as a three-season porch before being filled in with cinder blocks and plaster. The interior walls are lined with painted plywood, their seams hidden by delicate plaster

palm fronds popularized by contemporary decorators Frances Elkins and Syrie Maugham. The room gets its name from the Venetian Rococo Revival furniture that had once belonged to theatre impresario David Belasco.[18] A needlepoint carpet similar to one used in the Victorian Revival apartment of tastemaker Millicent Rogers remains in the room.

A nearly life size portrait of Lynn Fontanne painted by Wilfred de Glehn in 1913 dominates the south side of the room. To help make ends meet as a struggling young actress in London, Lynn had modeled for artists in their studios; here she honed her skill at pantomime, the ability to express a mode or emotion silently, using only the body, a skill that would come in useful as an actress. She is depicted seated on a Louix XVI bench before a gilt screen dressed in a floral kimono-like dress with pink sash. Her hair carefully arranged, and a faint blush on her cheeks, Lynn turns to offer a gentle smile to the viewer, her remarkably long neck and white skin mirrored by the white chrysanthemums behind her. The Ten Chinmeys painting collection includes this work, five other de Glehns, the two Penley paintings mentioned earlier, and works by Graham Robertson, Leon Bakst, Augustus John, Hildreth Meiere, James Fosburgh and David Levine, as well as amateur works by friends such as Clemence Dane (author of *Bill of Divorcement*) and Noël Coward.

Alfred Lunt described the master bedroom suite as being "in either Victorian (early) or Louis-Philippe" style.[19] The Lunts' extensive use of wallpaper, a hallmark of Ten Chimneys interiors, defied the dictates of modernist tastemakers and contributed to the Victorian Revival atmosphere. Old moisture damage has caused wallpaper beneath a window in the room to detach partially from the wall, allowing one to see printed on the wastage the name of the manufacture, a name renowned in the history of interior design, *Nancy McClelland Inc.* The swag and garland wallpaper border used as wainscoting in the Master Bedroom was part of the *Regency* line designed by Nancy McClelland for Colonial Williamsburg's Williamsburg Inn in 1937.[20] The Victorian chintz–inspired wallpaper in two of the guest bedrooms and the Rococo- Revival style columns used to great effect along the grand staircase and in the Flirtation Room are in keeping with the style of McClelland's historically inspired designs. Alfred and Lynn may have sought the advice of Nancy McClelland and selected the patterns in New York or may have purchased the rolls from specialty shops in Chicago. Claggett Wilson writes in 1938 that he is "as busy as a button on a back-house door as Alfred has asked me to furnish the second floor . . . ordering carpets, wall-papers and such . . ."[21]

In reviewing photos of the interiors one is struck by the consistency of Ten Chimney's rooms. For fifty years they remained essentially unchanged with no major alterations except for a refreshing of fabrics and an occasional change of artwork. Even the floral arrangements, causal groupings of one color of flowers grown on the estate's cutting gardens and greenhouse, were repeated year after year. It was as if the rooms were eternal stage sets designed for living. Once the appropriate effect or mode had been struck the interiors were left unaltered year after year.

During the restoration of the house the challenge was to maintain a lived-in quality to the rooms, conserving original wallpapers, carpets, and textiles whenever possible, while bringing back the sparkle the house had had while it was the Lunts' home. The mellowness of a lovingly used and aged interior was maintained. Today Ten Chimneys' Victorian Revival interiors survive to delight the spirit and trick the eye, just as they had during the many years it was Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne's country retreat and personal showplace.

I would like to acknowledge the help of Sean Malone and my colleagues at Ten Chimneys Foundation, William Seale and the Ten Chimneys Preservation Advisory Committee, Randall McLean, and Carmichael Jones McDonald.

Notes

1. "Reunion in Genesee," Vogue , November 1933, 52.
2. Claggett Wilson, undated letter. Lunt-Fontanne Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society.
3. Ward Morehouse , "The Lunts of Genesee, Wisconsin," *Vogue*, May 1, 1946, 72.
4. See Alan Rosenberg, "Victoriana 1930," *Nineteenth Century*, Spring 2007.
5. Claudia Cassidy, "A Visit with the Lustrous Lunts," *Chicago Tribune Magazine*, June 25, 1967, 20.
6. Morehouse, "The Lunts of Genesee, Wisconsin," 110.
7. Alfred Lunt to Charles "Carl" Dornbusch , August 2 and August 11, 1938, Ten Chimneys Foundation archives.
8. Elsie de Wolfe, *The House in Good Taste* (New York: The Century Co., 1913), 316 – 317.
9. Jocasta Innes, *Scandinavian Painted Décor* (London: Cassel, 1995), 106 – 117.
10. Nancy McClelland, *Historic Wall-Papers* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1924), 231.
11. John Hale, Recorded oral interview, 1999. Ten Chimneys Foundation archives.
12. Claggett Wilson, "Jack Afloat and Susan Ashore," *The Magazine Antiques*, July 1942, 22.
13. Jared Brown, *The Fabulous Lunts* (New York: Atheneum, 1986), 337-339.
14. Morehouse, "The Lunts of Genesee, Wisconsin," 110.
15. Augusta Owen Patterson, "Decoration & The Fine Arts," *Town and Country*, September 1940, 40.
16. Ibid.
17. I am grateful to Susan Brantly, Marcus Cederstrom and Aaron Kahn of the University of Wisconsin's Scandinavian studies department for their translation assistance.
18. George Bugbee, Notebook. Ten Chimneys Foundation archives.
19. Alfred Lunt to Charles "Carl" Dornbusch, January 1938. Lunt-Fontanne Archives Wisconsin Historical Society.
20. Bridget May, "Nancy Vincent McClelland (1877 – 1959): Professionalizing Interior Decoration in the Early Twentieth Century," *Journal of Design History* 21, no. 1 (2008): 59 – 71. I am grateful to Gregory Herringshaw and Bridget May for sharing their Nancy McClelland research with me.
21. Claggett Wilson, October 19, 1938. Lunt-Fontanne Archives, Wisconsin Historical Society.

Preservation Diary

A New Shell

WARREN ASHWORTH

Religious institutions, like hermit crabs, often have to shoehorn themselves into different dwellings as they develop and grow. The Chinese Community Church in Washington, D.C., has fitted itself into no fewer than five homes since it was founded in 1935. The last of these, and its present home, underwent an ambitious and costly renovation, for which it received a 2010 Preservation Award from the Victorian Society in America. And in the process of research for the preservation, it was discovered that the building is by a nationally renowned architect.

Before becoming the new home for the Chinese Community Church, the building on the corner of 5th and I Streets, Northwest, in the Chinatown district of Washington had a series of tenants. Built in 1852 by a Presbyterian congregation, in 1900 it became a synagogue, and in the 1950s a Baptist Church. When the Chinese Community Church moved in, in 2006, the building was somewhat ragtag, but large enough and sound enough to suit its needs if considerable stabilization and renovation work were done. Just as the congregation was pondering the cost of the amount of necessary work, a call came out of the blue from Gould Property Company, a Washington real estate developer, proposing a wholesale renovation of the exterior of the building. And then came a huge surprise: the company announced that it was willing to underwrite up to $650,000.00 of the cost. "What's the catch?" was the response of the church's board, says Gate Lew, a local architect and board member. "This was an unknown entity coming in off the street and offering more than half a million dollars!" But, as it turned out, Gould's proposal was part of an arrangement with the District of Columbia that would enable the developer to demolish some less distinguished nearby properties and build a residential high rise. After serious debate and lengthy consideration the church accepted the offer.

Before approaching the church, Gould had hired EHT Traceries to determine if the building had sufficient merit to restore. What they discovered was much more than "sufficient." No one was more surprised than architectural historian Emily Eig, principal at EHT, to find that the original church was designed by the Philadelphia architect Thomas Ustick Walter. In the middle of the nineteenth century Walter was considered the dean of Americn architects, having inherited the mantle from Benjamin Latrobe and William Strickland. At that time, his most famous project was being built a few blocks away; he had been engaged as the fourth architect for the United States Capitol, and his design for the north and south extensions to accommodate the Senate and the House of Representatives was under construction. According to Eig, Walter was extremely interested in the design potential of cast iron, which had only recently been introduced as a building material; in 1855, not three years after the construction of this church, his design for a cast-iron dome on the Capitol was approved by Congress. This is significant because Eig believes there is a possibility his tower on the church was an early foray into cast iron.

It was Eig's perseverance that led to the discovery of Walter as the architect of the church. What few published records there were credited the church design to Thomas Entwhistle. A photograph of the church from 1906 found on the internet site Flickr provided the first clue that the building had once been quite striking and that perhaps an extraordinarily talented hand was behind its design. Eig knew that Entwhistle had been primarily a builder and felt it unlikely that he had been the architect. Delving further into historical documents led to a suggestion that Thomas U. Walter might have been associated with the

L to R: The church, 1906. Before restoration, with a Formstone covering. The church as it stands currently, with a new tower.

church, but no solid evidence was found. Her firm examined the list of known work attributed to Walter but found no mention of the church. They then searched in the Philadelphia architectural drawing archive where many of Walter's drawings reside but no hint of any church resembling this was among them. Finally, searching in the Library of Congress they found portions of Walter's diaries written while the architect was posted in Washington and hit pay dirt – an 1852 reference indicating that he "turned over" drawings for a church to the Presbyterian congregation with a site on 5th Street. A month later, church records show, construction began. A delighted Eig noted "it is not often you find an unknown Thomas U. Walter building."

Once Gould Property Company had come to an agreement with the leadership of the Chinese Community Church, plans for the restoration were drawn up by a talented team of preservationists and architects. Work commenced in 2008 and was completed by 2009, winning awards from the District of Columbia Office of Planning and Mid-Atlantic Construction as well as the VSA.

Background: A Congregation in Search of a Permanent Home

Amazingly enough, this was not the first time the Chinese Community Church (CCC) had its fate affected by a real estate deal, but the *third* time. A non-denominational congregation founded by Reverend Dr. Ching-Chong Hung in 1935 to serve the burgeoning community of immigrants in the area at that time, it found its first home in the basement of the Mount Vernon Place Church, a *neo-grec* temple built by a Methodist congregation on 7th Street and Massachusetts Avenue. This arrangement worked well until the 1950s when the Chinese church found itself competing with the Methodist congregation for space. It was clearly time for them to find a home of their own.

So, in 1952 the Church purchased two townhouses three blocks west, on L and 10th Streets, Northwest, on the northern edge of Chinatown. One townhouse was demolished to make way for the new church building and the other preserved as a parish house. The new building, which still stands, is an evocative brick structure adorned with classic Chinese elements, graciously proportioned and respectful of the townhouse next door. CCC occupied this church for the next 43 years as it continued to grow. This growth contrasted significantly with overall demographic changes in Washington, for after the riots of 1968, many of those who resided in the District of Columbia fled to the suburbs. "It was the fact that we were non-denominational that saved us," says Gate Lew. While many denominational churches moved out to the suburbs with their Chinese parishioners, this congregation was anchored by its very openness and its well-known social outreach programs. Also, it was, and is, the only Chinese church in the area to offer services in Cantonese; sermons are also conducted in Mandarin and English, as they are in the other dozen or so Chinese congregations around D.C. By contrast, during the flight-to-suburbia years, the Mt. Vernon Place Methodist Church steadily lost parishioners and was practically empty.

In 1994, then, the Chinese Community Church, now bursting at the seams of its own building through further growth, made a *new* arrangement with the Mt. Vernon Place church to occupy its sanctuary while putting the 10th Street buildings up for sale. After some years on the market however, CCC had found no buyers. Taking another tack, the church leaders began to consider expanding their L Street building and moving back in. The church contracted with Washington architect Darrel Rippeteau of Rippeteau Architects PC to draw up plans for this in 2005, but before any renovations commenced the church was offered and accepted 3.8 million dollars to sell the building to the neighboring property owner who wanted to develop an apartment building on their site. Then, shortly after the sale, CCC learned that the congregation's current place of worship, the Mt. Vernon church, was to be acquired by yet another developer in yet another multi-million dollar deal and that they would soon have to vacate – again. All fallbacks had disappeared.

Preservation Challenges

With its peripatetic history, the church board was relieved and elated to find and purchase its present home, by then the Corinthian Baptist Church, on 5th and I Streets, just two blocks east of the Mt. Vernon building, a commodious structure complete with a suitable parish house in a townhouse next door to accommodate CCC's expanding religious education programs and its community outreach efforts.

The building was a perfect candidate for restoration, but this would not be an easy undertaking. In the 1950s the building had been refaced with a cementitious faux-stone product called Formstone. Referred to by Baltimore filmmaker John Waters as "the polyester of brick," Formstone was used extensively in Baltimore and vicinity, including Washington, after its introduction in 1937 by Albert Knight of Baltimore for his Lasting Products Company. So common was its use there that it has become part of the twentieth-century architectural vocabulary; Baltimore's Hamden Village Main Street Program guidelines for building restoration, for example, state, "While Formstone removal may also be included as a façade improvement, applicants are encouraged to keep Formstone that is in good condition as it is a distinctive part of Baltimore's unique heritage." This renewal of enthusiasm for Formstone may come as a relief to many owners of buildings finished with the product because it can be difficult or impossible to remove without destroying the façade beneath it. The substance was installed in a manner similar to stucco; the first step was nailing lath to the existing façade, followed by a brown coat of cement, followed by a second coat often installed using molds imitating stone, and finally a third coat was applied with various colors. Often, workers applied the

(L to R): Window before restoration, after removal of the Formstone. Window after completed restoration.

cementitious mix directly to the exterior walls, without lath, which made it difficult or impossible to remove later without destroying part of the original building fabric. While divine intervention cannot be proven, in this regard the CCC's 1852 brick church definitely caught two lucky breaks. The installation of the lath was the first. Workmen from the preservation contractor Worcester Eisenbrandt, Inc., found it had been nailed into the mortar joints of the brick rather than the brick itself; thus the bricks were all intact. The second fortunate circumstance is illustrated in the 1906 photograph showing the building painted in a light color, applied perhaps around 1900 when it became a synagogue. Mercifully, this paint kept the stucco from bonding with the brick and it was possible to demolish the Formstone layer without pulling away brick.

Todd Anderson, project manager at Worcester Eisenbrandt, said the removal revealed two interesting discoveries. One was the round window opening above the front entryway. A stained glass roundel panel representing the Star of David had been pushed in and lay on the deck of the steeple base; this was donated to the Sixth Street Synagogue nearby and a new stained glass window was designed and installed. Also exposed were two historical plaques; the first, in bronze, commemorating the founding of the synagogue, was unscrewed, polished up and donated to the local Jewish Museum. Under that was the original marble entablature commemorating the laying of the original 1852 cornerstone. After disposing of the Formstone, the next step was to remove the many layers of paint from the brick, requiring several applications of an environmentally friendly chemical peel. With the installation of the Formstone, many of the building's distinctive architectural features had been removed or damaged, among them the elegant arching window "eyebrows"; additionally, the Formstone had created water pockets below the cornice brackets, causing significant rot in many of them.

Preservation architect Darrel Rippeteau had two guides in preparing drawings for the new eyebrows. One was the 1906 photograph and the other was some remaining woodwork with paint palimpsest of the originals concealed by the Formstone. For the tower, he had as evidence only the photograph from 1906 his only clue. When asked if he thought the tower might have been made of cast iron he replied that although it was possible, he felt that various facts mitigated against it. One was that the tower had a remarkably short life considering it that was gone by the time of the early photograph and to dismantle a cast iron tower of that scale would have been a significant undertaking. More likely, he thought, the tower was wooden, had rotted, and was taken down.

Knowing that the church board was enamored of exactly the sort of tall New England wood steeple he wanted to avoid, Rippeteau was careful always to refer to it as a tower and to remind the board that it was very much in the style of Italianate design so popular at the time. Eventually, with the help of a model he constructed, the board came around to his point of view. Along with the tower, he detailed the eyebrows above the windows with the bold expressiveness of that Italianate tradition in mind.

The installation of the tower was the last step in the restoration process. This was built offsite by Worcester Eisenbrandt from Rippeteau's plan and then gently lowered by crane onto its brick base. Todd Anderson describes this as the most breathtaking and exciting part of the restoration process. The tower dropped in place perfectly aligned with the existing structure – and in a matter of minutes Thomas U. Walter's original church appeared to be serenely looking back at the crowd that had gathered to watch.

That delightful discovery that underneath the dowdy structure is an architectural gem – that the frog is really a prince – would never have happened were it not for a series of financially driven real estate swaps. It also would never have happened had the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office, armed with historic preservation regulations, not required a developer to invest in a quid pro quo. This saga demonstrates that real estate values, deals and swaps often directly affect what buildings do and do not get saved or restored.

The Bibliophilist

Peabody & Stearns: Country Houses and Seaside Cottages

Annie Robinson. W. W. Norton & Company, 2010.

Some fifty-five years ago, when as a student I shifted from trying to ape Miesian boxes or Wrightian Prairie houses to studying nineteenth-century architecture, the state of American architectural history was such that the only permissible subject was H. H. Richardson's work. That was because Henry-Russell Hitchcock had sanctioned him in a monograph published by the Museum of Modern Art in 1936, and Vincent Scully had extrapolated from his domestic designs to invent the Shingle Style in his Yale dissertation of 1949 (published 1955). That state of affairs began to change first with books such as John Maass's *Gingerbread Age* of 1957 and then the founding of The Victorian Society in America in 1966. By 1973 a major exhibition of and monograph on the architecture of Philadelphia's Frank Furness, a designer whose work dramatically opposed Richardson's, raised no eyebrows. Since then there has been a steady stream of publications devoted to a wide range of architects of Victorian America (although many more are wanted). The latest, Annie Robinson's study of the Boston-based partnership of Robert Swain Peabody and John Goddard Stearns, Jr., makes a most welcome and timely addition to the list.

By any standard Peabody & Stearns figured large in the story of the American built environment, but the sheer volume of the partners' work is especially notable. During their forty-seven year joint career the office produced over a thousand buildings, averaging nearly twenty-five a year (by comparison Richardson's twenty year career produced something just over seventy), ranging, as the author notes, from the high-rise tower of the Custom House in Boston to a log cabin in Iowa. In her book she has wisely confined herself to "one segment of that firm's output," the partnership's manageable domestic resort architecture, leaving most other building types for another time. The result is a partial but useful profile of an amazingly inventive firm, one that will be the standard reference for ages to come.

Robinson's scholarly work stems from ground prepared by the late Wheaton Holden's dissertation and subsequent article in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (1973) and the exhaustive later research of Margaret Henderson Floyd who sadly died before it could be published. After a gathering of color photographs of domestic exteriors, and an introduction largely devoted to Robert Swain Peabody, the book assumes the character of a regionally organized catalogue of the firm's swollen coastal "summer cottages," with a few churches, boat houses, beach pavilions, and resort hotels thrown in. New England works predominate, of course, but the Middle Atlantic States, the South, and the West receive their due. Each resort area is characterized by geography and history, and each entry contains genealogical and descriptive notes that profile clients from Appleton to Morgan to Vanderbilt, a detailed description of the architecture, and its preservation, alteration, or destruction noted (one Maine house was pulled down as recently as 2007 to be replaced by an even larger one), all accompanied by plans and elevations where available, and assorted photographs. This is supported by endnotes, bibliography, and a list of additional reading. The text is for the most part sound architectural writing, useful for scholars and readable by others, ranging as it does from "bargeboarded and jerkinhead gables" to "charm and grace."

I have only one nit to pick on the author's coverage. Surely York Hall, the year-round William D. Sewall House in Bath, Maine, of 1896-98, briefly mentioned in passing in the introduction to New England, and illustrated with a small reproduction of the firm's front elevation but not findable in the Index under "Bath," "Sewall," or "York," deserved fuller treatment. Here her policy of omitting "nonresort buildings in resort towns" does the reader ill service. There is a splendid watercolor perspective of the house in the house, probably from Peabody's hand. The design itself is a masterpiece of the Georgian Colonial Revival, as the author notes, a spatially generous reworking of such pre-Revolutionary models as the Vassal-Craigie-Longfellow House in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is surely one of Peabody & Stearns's masterpieces and would have looked "at home" in this inventory.

The publication brings knowledge of much of the domestic work of the partnership to the coffee table and the scholar's study. If I quibble a bit it is because a product so good could have been better. John Goddard Stearns, Jr. is almost non-existent in the "Narrative of a Practice" which introduces the book. While by all the evidence Peabody was the form-giver and certainly the visible face of the office, it was a partnership, and Stearns deserved better treatment. (This section begins with two oval portraits that visually suggest this unbalance, one of Peabody as a handsome elder statesman of the profession, the other of Stearns as a fresh-faced youth.) What would Sullivan have been without Adler, McKim and White

without Mead, Richardson without Gambrill or Rutan? Architecture is not the art of the individual. Since the book as a whole is organized geographically rather than chronologically, we get no clear sense of the partnership's overall stylistic development, although this might not be a bad thing, since Peabody & Stearns bounced around the various inherited styles. Many of these houses are privately owned and presumably not readily available to the photographer, which may account for the lamentable paucity of interior views among the new illustrations if not the same lack among the vintage ones.

On a broader note, I particularly like the fact that Robinson characterizes Peabody as a designer in a way that suggests a very important point of contrast between him and Richardson generated by their educational experiences, one that marks the polarities of American Victorian architecture. Although both studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris only Peabody also worked in London, with Alfred Waterhouse. Richardson's practical experience was with Théodore Labrouste in Paris. The opposed French and English schools of thinking are reflected in the pair's opposed working methods. Richardson produced thumbnail sketches that were invariably plans and elevations reflecting the French conception of a building as a rational extension of its plan. His office rarely produced a perspective view. As the author points out, Peabody began the design process with a perspective sketch of the intended building whose plan was then developed by the office. He designed from outside in rather than Richardson's inside out. The result was a contrast between Peabody's (often) richly picturesque works and Richardson's quiet, disciplined forms. Peabody was a gifted draftsman and artist (Richardson was not) whose sketches of picturesque buildings were often executed in watercolor. Although some such sketches are reproduced here, the renderer is not always clearly identified.

Reading the chockablock, well-wrought text and looking at the many illustrations brought together in this book, a monumental labor of research, organization, photographing, observation, and writing for which Ms Robinson merits high praise and hearty thanks, makes one long for that period when the talented rich could be domiciled by a firm such as Peabody & Stearns, a period in contrast to ours, when the dream houses of the Wall-Street hedge-fund nabobs take the form of McMansions, sometimes built on the rubble of earlier landmarks. If the present volume does find its way to the latter's coffee tables, let's hope it has an impact on their taste.

Reviewed by James F. O'Gorman

The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore

Peter Pennoyer and Anne Walker, with a foreword by Robert A. M. Stern.
W. W. Norton & Company, 2006.

The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore is one volume in a recent – and highly gratifying – spate of books published in the new century that have celebrated some of the great but neglected architectural firms of the last. We have W. W. Norton to thank not only for this work dedicated to Warren & Wetmore, but for others on the likes of Ely Jacques Kahn, Ralph Adams Cram (previously reviewed in these pages), Bertram Goodhue, Leopold Eidlitz, Delano & Aldrich, Grosvenor Atterbury, and Peabody & Stearns (also reviewed in this issue). That such a series of books has been produced in the present publishing climate is something of a minor – or perhaps not so minor – miracle, and it is a testament to a revivifying interest in the architectural and urban achievements of a generation that wove the fabric of many of our great cities during a time of technological, economic, and cultural expansion.

Like such better-known contemporaries as McKim, Mead & White, Whitney Warren (1864-1943) and Charles D. Wetmore (1866-1941) were poised at the dawn of the 20th century to respond to the world-changing developments in transportation, communication, technology and trade that would give birth to the present shape of the modern city. Although the firm, comprised of the École des Beaux-Arts–trained and Francophilic Warren and the financially and socially savvy lawyer Wetmore, executed its share of private homes and country clubs for the robber barons, its strongest suit and most lasting legacy was the wholesale development of the American urban fabric through its designs for railroad stations, hotels, apartment buildings, and tall office buildings.

The book, co-authored by neo-traditionalist architect Peter Pennoyer and architectural historian Anne Walker, ably covers the thirty-year-long arc of a firm whose prodigious output totaled over three hundred completed

projects between 1898 and 1931. The book proper is preceded by 32 full-color plates of some of the finest of Warren & Wetmore's extant works: among them the Newport Country Club (1895), the lush and theatrical New York Yacht Club (1901), the opulent James A. Burden Jr. house in New York (1905; now the Convent of the Sacred Heart), Grand Central Terminal (1913), Steinway Hall in New York (1925), the New York Central Building (1929, now the Helmsley Building), and the University Library in Louvain, Belgium (1928). Given that many of the firm's finest effects were achieved in the rich use of various materials, the inclusion of these color plates is a visual boon and helps to impart a fuller sense of the black-and-white material that follows.

At the outset, the authors provide the usual background on the formation of the two men who would become the firm of Warren & Wetmore. Both were born into privilege. Whitney Warren gravitated to architecture school first at Columbia, but then to Paris, where he developed his love of European history and tradition. His Beaux-Arts education and his prominent social ties were almost immediately cemented upon his return to the States and his winning of the commission for first the Newport Country Club – over such more established architects as Peabody & Stearns – and then the New York Yacht Club. Wetmore, also born to a well-to-do family, went to Harvard and, though he trained there as a lawyer, his interest in real estate flourished while he was at Cambridge and the combination eventually made him an ideal business partner when he and Warren joined forces just after the latter won the career-making commission for the Yacht Club. From there the partners enjoyed a Gilded Age success that culminated in such historical highlights as Grand Central Terminal and the New York Central Building, but came to an end in 1931 with the onset of the Great Depression and the change in architectural tastes that led to modernism.

Generously interspersed with illustrations drawn from the extensive Warren & Wetmore Collection at the Avery Library at Columbia University, as well as the Library of Congress and the Museum of the City of New York (among others), the volume is subdivided into four general periods: the "Early Projects" from 1898 to 1904; the "Grand Central Years" from 1904-1914; the period from 1914-1922 when the firm was active executing apartments, hotels and office buildings; and "Late Projects" from 1922-1931. What emerges is a remarkable portrait of a firm that both followed and shaped the burgeoning twentieth-century city, New York foremost. The firm cut its teeth in its early period on private commissions, from country homes for the well-heeled in Tuxedo Park, on Long Island, in Mount Kisco; and city homes along Fifth Avenue and row houses from 56th to 91st Streets.

Warren & Wetmore's entrée into the history books, of course, is Grand Central Terminal (1904-1914). The competition to enlarge and simultaneously bury underground the rail lines coming into the city from the north and east was initially won by the firm of Reed & Stem. Well after the competition was over, Warren essentially elbowed his way in via his personal connections to the Vanderbilts, who controlled the railroad. What followed was sometimes contentious – and generated years of lawsuits – but nevertheless resulted in one of the greatest urban transportation centers of the century as well as one of New York's most beloved and admired landmarks.

Even more than the familiar terrain of Grand Central, the impression that makes its mark upon reviewing the remainder of the firm's career is the subsequent development of the urban fabric in and around the transportation heart of New York City. The burgeoning of the rail lines spurred the building of grand hotels in the city (Warren & Wetmore built such examples as the Ritz-Carlton, the Hotel Belmont, and the Hotel Vanderbilt) and then many other grand hotels and resorts from Cuba to Colorado Springs to Hawaii. Once Fourth Avenue, previously a canyon of open rail lines, was transformed into Park Avenue, apartment buildings sprang up on both sides as the wealthy moved addresses and changed living styles. Warren & Wetmore designed and built numerous of Park Avenue's most prestigious apartment buildings, railroad stations, hotels and apartment houses naturally enough entwined with business and finance, which in this period prospered in midtown Manhattan. Warren & Wetmore provided such businesses with their homes as well, including the Robert Goelet Building, the Heckscher Building, the Aeolian Building, the Steinway Building, and many others. The crowning glory of these efforts was certainly the New York Central Building (1927-9, now the Helmsley Building), the firm's last major project in New York, and a kind of swan song for Beaux-Arts skyscraper design. Built on the brink of the Great Depression as well as the changing tastes of the times, the New York Central Building is a contemporary of such Art Deco skyscrapers as the Empire State Building and Rockefeller Center that, in turn, would eventually give way to the corporate modernism of the post-war period.

The book comes to a bit of an abrupt and unsatisfactory end, in which the reader is left to make his or her own surmises as to the legacy and lasting importance of the firm. But even if nothing other than Grand Central Terminal remained, we would still celebrate Warren & Wetmore as one of the great architectural partnerships of the early twentieth century, one who placed an indelible stamp on the map of New York.

Reviewed by Ingrid Steffensen

Crystal and Arabesque: Claude Bragdon, Ornament and Modern Architecture

Jonathan Massey. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009.

Claude Bragdon and the Beautiful Necessity

Eugenia Victoria Ellis, editor. Cary Graphic Arts Press, Rochester Institute of Technology, 2010.

During his lifetime, Claude Fayette Bragdon (1866–1946) was best known as an architect in the progressive tradition of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. Also a philosopher, graphic artist, stage designer and author (and this is not an exhaustive list), he was based in Rochester, New York, and made a name for himself in the early twentieth century as the designer of a number of that city's prominent buildings – including its New York Central Railroad Station, Bevier Memorial Building, and First Universalist Church – as well as buildings in the surrounding area. But then he was neglected by the artistic and architectural world for nearly a century.

It is not surprising that a scholar has finally produced a book about the life and work of Claude Bragdon. But it is surprising that suddenly not one but two of them have appeared in just the last two years, focusing on Bragdon's life, work and thought. The first, which appeared in 2009, is by Jonathan Massey, an architect and scholar who devoted at least ten years to researching and writing *Crystal and Arabesque: Claude Bragdon, Ornament, and Modern Architecture*. The second, *Claude Bragdon and the Beautiful Necessity*, functions as the catalogue of an exhibition by the same name mounted by the Department of Special Collections, University of Rochester. It ran from June through October 15, 2010, and focused primarily on Bragdon's architecture and graphic design. The book contains a series of essays, written by no less than eleven scholars (including Massey), each devoted to examining a single aspect of Bragdon's life, art and thought.

Beginning with the more recent of the two books, *Claude Bragdon and the Beautiful Necessity*, the titles of some of the essays that precede the catalogue will give the reader a good idea of the wide range of Bragdon's thought and work: Christina Malathouni, "Claude Bragdon Reads Arthur Schopenhauer: 'Architecture is in space alone '"; Joscelyn Godwin: "Western New York's Theosophical Enlightener"; Joan Ockman, "Architecture and the 'Spirit' of Democracy: Variations on a Theme in the Writings of Louis Sullivan, Claude Bragdon, and Frank Lloyd Wright"; and Paul Emmons, "On Turning the Corner to the Fourth Dimension: Claude Bragdon's Isometric Perspective." These examples indicate where most of those who have written about Bragdon in the catalogue and elsewhere are headed: in the direction of philosophy and theory. Bragdon's theory is the primary concern of seven contributors out of the eleven essayists who wrote for the catalogue. The only authors who chose to write about Bragdon's art and architecture here are Jean France on his architecture and furniture; Richard Guy Wilson on Bragdon's academic sources; Mary Nixon on his sketchbooks, scrapbooks, posters, bookplates and book covers and Marcia Feuerstein on Bragdon's stage designs. For the reader not especially interested in theory, this book still merits consideration by virtue of the four essays that relate directly to the exquisite images of Bragdon's architecture and graphic designs spread across 100 pages of this roughly 200-page book. Finally, this large-format book is worth having because it is beautifully produced by a Rochester graphic arts press and printed in that city.

But if the reader is interested in theory, then this book is assuredly the place to begin as each essay is relatively short. This has forced the writers to focus on the essential elements of Bragdon's thought and thereby assist the reader in understanding the often complex ideas presented. Furthermore, whatever theoretical aspect of Bragdon's work is being examined, it is obvious that each author is an expert on the subject and has delved deeply into the origins of the original thought and its transformation by Bragdon, thus leading the reader easily through what otherwise might be an impenetrable thicket of ideas.

Jonathan Massey's *Crystal and Arabesque* is a book of a quite different character. It is written by a single author who has devoted himself largely to exploring and explaining Bragdon's theory as preserved in his published writings – most of which also contain drawings specially made by him to illustrate his theory. This must have been a Herculean task as Bragdon never seemed to stop writing throughout his life, not only theoretical tracts, but also about his architecture, urban planning, social interaction, and stage design, among other things. In fact, the chronological bibliography of his published writings presented as an appendix to the exhibition catalogue consumes twelve of its large pages. And beside his architectural production, there are the notebooks, letters, designs, and paintings to occupy Bragdon's biographer. Bragdon also never stopped borrowing ideas from philosophers and architectural theorists, historic and contemporary, forcing the scholar to run down his sources, then compare what he proposed in theory with those sources and with the theoretical writings of his

contemporaries. And of course, having chosen to write about a forgotten man, Massey necessarily had to evaluate the significance of his subject both historically and in relation to contemporary architectural theory.

Massey's research is above reproach: he has been everywhere, found everything – including some obscure articles I missed when researching Louis Sullivan many years ago. For the person genuinely interested in Bragdon's theory, this is the book. I can't imagine anything more comprehensive on the subject ever being published. Indeed, although a good deal smaller in format than the Rochester book, it seems to me to weigh more, perhaps because it is printed on about 300 pages of coated paper. And, as a result of the paper and high quality printing, the illustrations, though generally smaller than the Rochester book, seem to be just as crisp and clear.

Although all the authors who wrote about Bragdon's theory in the Rochester book, and Massey in both places, continue to provide rationales for resurrecting Bragdon as artist and theorist, I still wonder why so many scholars have suddenly taken an interest in his work since the arrival of the new millennium. A couple of thoughts in this regard: although there has always been interest in architectural and artistic theory, such interest seems to have grown exponentially after the demise of architectural rationalism, now called "modern," and its replacement "post-modern" thought. It also may be driven by a change at schools of architecture, many of which now offer the Ph.D. degree in architecture, as the degree generally seems to involve the preparation of a dissertation centered on architectural theory. In any case, Bragdon's thought and work were certain to become the object of study by those interested in architectural theory as he left so much behind, written, published and drawn, that would serve as fodder for scholars.

Yet, even though most of the authors cited above have much to say about why Bragdon's work is significant both historically and for contemporary architects and architectural theory, I can't help wondering if some of their positive assertions about his historical significance may be a bit too rosy. For example, when the exhibition catalogue is examined from an aesthetic point of view, what jumps out is not Bragdon's architectural production but the high quality of his two-dimensional designs. He excelled in everything from drawing through poster design to stage design – as many of the authors acknowledge. Yet, when the same authors evaluate Bragdon's graphic design, they concede that his work in this medium was mainly derivative, perhaps with the exception of his festival projects and stage designs and his crystalline drawings and paintings. Thus, in the same way those writers who discuss Bragdon's theory are obliged to uncover his sources, so must the authors who consider his graphic work.

As for his buildings, it is clear that Bragdon was a competent architect but hardly more than that. All his buildings lack the kind of imaginative design needed to attract the attention of architectural critics focusing on aesthetic issues or searching for something in his buildings that contributed to moving the architecture of his day forward. Furthermore, Bragdon's architecture, like his graphic work, is equally derivative according to those authors who have written about it. Even where Bragdon thought of himself as breaking ground, as in the case of his major work, the New York Central Station in Rochester, he was not. As Richard Guy Wilson observes: "Bragdon claimed that his design for the New York Central Railroad Station in Rochester came from the 'the-driving wheels of a locomotive engine,' and also 'musical parallels' and 'numerical ratios,' but the structure additionally harkened back to Ancient Rome as did many other large railroad stations of the period."

But if Bragdon does not survive resurrection as a particularly significant architect or artist, it may well be that his place as a prominent thinker and theorist in the realm of art and architecture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will have been secured by those scholars who have written so eloquently about this in *Crystal and Arabesque* and in *Claude Bragdon and the Beautiful Necessity*.

Reviewed by Paul Sprague

Norah Lindsay: The Life and Art of a Garden Designer

Allyson Hayward. Frances Lincoln Ltd. (UK), 2007.

Many of us are familiar with the great English garden designers of the early twentieth century, such as Gertrude Jekyll and Vita Sackville-West. But few today have heard of Norah Lindsay, one of the most prominent and influential English gardeners between the world wars. Born into an upper-class family, she spent her life in country houses amongst England's elite, lunching with Winston Churchill and gardening for the Prince of Wales. Her own country garden at Sutton Courtenay Manor House in Oxfordshire was famous for its lush and colorful

displays; it became the focal point for her gardening career, begun late in life at age 51 following her failed marriage and the need to support herself.

Allyson Hayward is a noted garden historian and author. Her fascination with Norah Lindsay began during her training at Harvard's Landscape Institute, and she spent over a decade retracing Norah Lindsay's projects, visiting estates from Cliveden to Rotherfield Park in Hampshire. Lindsay was a prolific letter writer and Hayward was able to access her correspondence and diaries, preserved in family archives as well as materials in the libraries and attics of many of the country homes for which she gardened. This has afforded us not only clear and detailed descriptions of Lindsay's projects but a fascinating glimpse into the heyday of English country life between the wars – an idyllic time never to be replicated following the cultural and economic changes that swept Britain following World War II.

The book begins with an arresting cover: a period photograph of Norah Lindsay dressed for traveling in her pearls and satin hat. Profusely illustrated with a combination of archival photographs and modern images, the book is 288 pages long. Chapters are organized chronologically, making it easy to follow the course of Lindsay's life and understand how she became such an important and well-loved gardener and personality of the period.

"The Early Years" traces Lindsay's life from her birth into a privileged family to her upbringing amongst lawn parties and balls, Ascot week and shopping. Her mother Emmie was a famous beauty, coveted by King Edward VII (who often invited her to dinner or tea), and Lindsay inherited her mother's good looks and social charms. The friends and contacts she made during these early years were important, since they became her source of clients later in life. In 1895, she married a dashing young lieutenant in the Indian Army, Harry Lindsay, and they moved into the medieval Manor House of Sutton Courtenay, a gift to the young couple from Lord Wantage, Harry's wealthy cousin.

The second chapter, "A Riot of the Senses," describes life for the young couple at Sutton Courtenay between 1895 and 1920. Built in 1150, the Manor House and its Norman hall had been a royal residence at one time and the property stretched for three acres along the Thames. Lindsay used the romantic setting to create lush, picturesque gardens that became the talk of England and a sought-after destination for many visitors and guests. Lindsay soon became one of the country set's favored hostesses, her gay weekend parties always popular, her beauty and wit admired and chronicled by the leading figures of society and politics of the day. Life remained idyllic for the first decade at Sutton Courtenay; this is when she began to develop her interest in garden design. Although she had no formal training, she possessed an artist's eye for color and proportion, combining the naturalistic masses of color and blooms of Gertrude Jekyll with the structure of clipped hedges and trees of Italy and France. Lindsay's herbaceous borders were wider than Jekyll's and she grouped flowers together in various sizes but in similar colors for an impression of rolling movement from side to side and front to back. Inspired by William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement, she built rustic and simple benches and pergolas made from saplings tied together and added accents of antique terra cotta urns on top of pedestals.

By the beginning of the twentieth century her happy lifestyle began to fall apart. The property required increasing amounts of maintenance and finances became tight, as Harry had no regular employment. Their marriage became strained and Lindsay began spending time away, escaping to the country estates of her family and friends, her gardens at Sutton Courtenay always a welcome refuge. Harry eventually moved into a flat in London and part of the estate was sold, but Lindsay was able to hold onto the Manor House and its gardens.

Chapter Three, "A New Life: Gardening's Necessity," chronicles Lindsay's development as a garden designer. She began at the top with commissions from wealthy friends such as Nancy and William Waldorf Astor, and with her work she was able to support herself and keep her beloved Sutton Courtenay. Lindsay began writing articles for magazines such as *Country Life* as her fame and reputation spread. Massing like colors together "*ton sur ton*" produced a "happier result," she wrote, and along with anchors of clipped hedges and architectural accents Lindsay's designs were considered the perfect compliment to English country estates. Within a few years she was in demand across the country.

Subsequent chapters detail many of Lindsay's commissions in grand gardens and estates across England as well as the Continent, from the Prince of Wales's Fort Belvedere, whose battlement walls she softened with poppies, rock roses and linum, to Prince Paul and Princess Olga of Yugoslavia's Brdo Castle, where she designed parterre gardens filled with herbaceous plantings.

World War II brought an end to many of Norah Lindsay's projects; in 1940 Sutton Courtenay was requisitioned by the government and turned into a home for students. Without a permanent residence of her own, Lindsay moved from the country estate of one friend to the next. She continued to work for her clients but her health declined and she died on June 20, 1948, of cancer. Happily, her sister Madeline carefully kept all of her correspondence, much of which is reproduced throughout the book.

The book concludes with a comprehensive bibliography, notes for each chapter, a fascinating client list detailing the scope and dates of her projects, and detailed biographical notes with short biographies of Lindsay's circle of friends.

Reviewed by Brian Coleman

Milestones

Lady Lucy, Survivor

SALLY BUCHANAN KINSEY

Put even the plainest woman into a beautiful dress and unconsciously she will try to live up to it.

LADY LUCY DUFF GORDON, 1932.

In London, in 1932, Lady Lucy Christiana Sutherland Wallace Duff Gordon (1863-1935) published her life story, *Discretions and Indiscretions*. Lucy, it needed to be told, was a survivor. In a male-dominated fashion world, Lucy had survived as "Lucile," a costume designer of international prestige; she had survived legal actions and business reversals; she had survived assorted marital problems; and she had survived, on April 14, 1912, the terrible ending of the maiden, and only, voyage of ... the *Titanic*.

Lucy Sutherland was born in London of an English father and a Canadian mother. Her father died young and her mother returned with her family, including Lucy's younger sister (who became the writer Elinor Glyn), to Canada. There, Lucy remembers, she grew up as a "typical little Canadian girl ... independent and resourceful ... a terrible tom-boy," in Guelph, Ontario. Her mother married again and moved to Scotland. There, Lucy, twenty-one years old, in 1884 wed a well-heeled but eccentric Scot, James Stuart Wallace, eighteen years her senior. They then moved to London, where the troubles and triumphs began.

Wallace, a perpetual ladies' man, ran away with a "panto" [pantomime] *artiste*, abandoning Lucy and their young daughter Esme to a life of genteel poverty. Then, in a fortunate turn of fate, Lucy's mother took up residence in London, where self-reliant Lucy, now divorced, realized her vocation. She began designing what she described as "personality dresses," unique creations that allowed each woman's individuality to shine; it was the era of Aestheticism and her clients hoped to appear "artistic" even if they could not attain the ideal. Through her talents and family connections, Lucy attracted important customers from London's theatre world – the "Ellen Terry circle" – and its drawing room society. She hired skilled assistants for the laborious handwork of the exquisite embroideries, delicate silk flowers, and clustered jewel appliqués that were the hallmarks of her style. By the 1890s she had established an elegant salon – an Adam interior, Angelica Kauffmann ceiling, gilt furniture – in London's fashionable West End. She attracted a financial partner, the handsome aristocrat Sir Cosmo Edmund Duff Gordon, who became her husband as well. They married in Venice in May 1900, and thus began a golden decade of success for "Lucile Ltd." Every woman in London who could afford it – all the way to the Duchess of York – wanted to be dressed by Lady Lucy Duff Gordon.

"Madame Lucile" was a keen business woman. She knew what pleased an impassioned patron: gratuitous attention; private viewings and fittings for custom lingerie and imaginative *couture* that assuredly would not be imitated or mirrored in any way; and gala receptions where the crème de la crème could flaunt their finery. In the early 1900s Lucy originated a new tradition of inviting select guests to view mannequin parades – live models wearing the choicest "dream dresses," with names like "Birth of Venus," in diaphanous layers of pastel silk – an idea that became quickly adopted by other designers. And, she was enjoying prestige in the entertainment world, especially for the acclaimed costumes worn by the popular performer Lily Elsie, a favorite of London audiences, in the brightest light of the 1907 season, *The Merry Widow*.

Lady Lucy Duff Gordon ("Lucile") in 1910, the year she opened her salon in New York City.

Lucy was becoming a wealthy woman. Ever ambitious, she courted America. In 1910 she began writing a weekly column for the *New York Examiner* and, with her associates, opened a salon in Manhattan that attracted names like Vanderbilt, Gould and Whitney. Lucile Ltd ran into a spot of trouble when the directors were charged with conspiracy to defraud the United States government by falsifying customs documents. Charges were dropped, but her company was fined for negligent record-keeping. Undaunted, in 1911 Lucile Ltd established a prosperous Paris *maison* (despite warnings from French colleagues: "Nobody but a Frenchwoman knows how to dress.")

Lucy and "Duff" enjoyed their earned celebrity, although the pressures of running three salons in three countries increased, as did their commercial travel. How to get to

New York the fastest way? Why not in the company of millionaires on the posh, speedy, brand-new *Titanic*?

> A great liner stealing through the vast loneliness of the Atlantic, the sky jeweled with myriads of stars overhead, and a thin little wind blowing cold and ever colder straight from the frozen ice fields, tapping its warning of approaching danger on the cosily shuttered portholes of the cabins, causing the look-out man to strain his eyes anxiously into the gloom. Inside this floating palace warmth, lights and music, the flutter of cards, the hum of voices, the gay lilt of a waltz – the unheeding sounds of a small world bent on pleasure. Then disaster, swift and overwhelming, turning all into darkness and chaos, the laughing voices changed into shuddering wails of despair – a story of horror unparalleled in the annals of the sea.

Lucy wrote this poignant description shortly after the disaster, and included it in *Discretions*. She had been reluctant to sail on the first crossing but the booking agent reassured her: "Why the boat is absolutely unsinkable. ... This first voyage is going to make history in ocean travel." It did: 2,207 persons on board; 1,502 lives lost; an inadequate number of lifeboats to aid those thrashing in the icy waters of the North Atlantic. Heroes, cowards and villains – their stories and the enormity of the tragedy continues to captivate writers (and movie directors) many decades later. In some accounts, the actions of Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon are viewed with a suspicion that he dismissed the "women and children first" protocol for entering a lifeboat and tried to bribe the oarsmen to ignore drowning passengers as his and his wife Lucy's boat rowed away swiftly from the wreckage. Later in London, amid a great public spectacle, an official inquiry pronounced the charges unfounded; however, Lucy noted in her autobiography that Duff, to the end of his life in 1931, "grieved at the slur which had been cast on his honor." They separated in 1915.

To be saved from a watery death was a defining experience for Lucy, but it did not deter her from crisscrossing the Atlantic. (She had another close call, when due to illness she had to cancel her suite on the fatal voyage of the *Lusitania*.) Lucy added new dimensions to her already productive life. In London and at her newly acquired *pavillon* in Versailles that same year, 1912, Lucy pursued a career in journalism by writing a column, "Her Wardrobe," for *Good Housekeeping*. Beginning in 1913, for a decade she wrote correspondence columns for *Harper's Bazaar*. In New York, she created costumes for actress Alice Joyce in *The American Princess*, the first of several movies featuring Lucile designs.

Phyllis, "Lucile" salon model, in costume for the Ziegfeld Follies, 1916.

The economic and emotional climates in the years of World War I were not kind to couturieres in Europe, so Lucy wisely stayed in Manhattan where her salon attracted more film and stage luminaries, such as the famous ballroom dancer Irene Castle and the actress Billie Burke. Lucile Ltd designed Miss Burke's trousseau for her wedding to Florenz Ziegfeld in 1914. That event led Lucy to a major commission beginning in 1915 until 1922, producing the outlandish costumes that were the signatures of risqué showgirls in the *Ziegfeld Follies*. Also in 1915, the indomitable Lucy established a salon in Chicago, and she began a five-year teaching position at the New York School of Fine Arts (now Parsons). In 1916-17, with the United States at war, Lucy the realist found another source of income: ready-to-wear collections for Sears, Roebuck catalogs. In 1917 she toured the eastern United States vaudeville circuit with a charity fashion pageant to aid war devastation in France. During that year, versatile Lucy was hired by the Chalmers Motor Company (later part of Chrysler) to design interiors for their town cars.

The name *Lucile* still conveyed charm and sophistication, but times and tastes were changing. Bankruptcy loomed. By 1919 the process, slow but sure, of disbanding Lucile Ltd had begun: first the London property in 1919; next Chicago, 1921; New York, 1922; and Paris 1922-30. Lucy did not surrender. She returned to London and showed collections under her own name in 1923 and 1924. Later in the 1920s she came to New York City to teach at the Traphagen School and Cooper Union, but mostly she made ends meet through her writing, in reduced circumstances. From 1921 to 1928 she wrote weekly columns for the *London Daily Sketch*, and then she authored her memoir. It describes her extravagant life in the most personal way, by the hand of the woman who survived it. Looking back to the Edwardian years, Lucy wrote that she regretted "the passing of the romance which made the world a very pleasant place," yet always the optimist, she emphasized that she expected "new adventures ... I await eagerly the future." She spent her last years in London.

Sources

The quotations in this essay are from Lady Lucy Duff Gordon's *Discretions and Indiscretions* (London: 1932). An official British government inquiry *The Loss of the Titanic* was published by the Stationery Office Limited (UK) and is still available. Also, see *Lucile Ltd* by Valerie D. Mendes and Amy de la Haye (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2009).

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