

# Nineteenth Century



# Editorial

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## *Chicago, 1871*

Chicago. 150 years ago, for three days in October, a great fire raged through this upstart city of 335,000 people.

A mere 40 years earlier the population of Chicago was about seventy-five people of European origin. By that year, 1831, the significant population of Native Americans there had dwindled due to the usual factors of disease, treaty-based relocation and slaughter.



H. H. Richardson, Marshall Field Warehouse, exterior view, c. 1887. Courtesy University of Michigan Library.

The city's growth in those forty years was breathtaking, stoked by the invention, in 1833, of balloon framing. This new method of building was fast and cheap, and many believe it was invented right there on Water Street. Chicago's attraction was not due to its weather, as anyone who has been there in January will tell you. The draw was that the Chicago River was destined to become the first navigable gateway to the Mississippi River from the Great Lakes. An inland canal connecting the Chicago River to the Illinois River, a wide tributary that empties into the Mississippi, was completed in 1848, allowing shipping to take place year-round, not just in the summer months.

The great Chicago Fire killed 300 and left a third of the population homeless but, similar to the great fire that destroyed London 1666, this was a great cleansing calamity that paved the way for the biggest real estate boom in the history of the United States. People poured in after the fire to build and to re-build bigger, taller, and more fireproof than before. One of those was Henry Hobson Richardson. William Tyre's article in this issue gives us an intimate look at this architect's combined home and office in Brookline, Massachusetts. The highlights of Richardson's Chicago work were his Marshall Field Wholesale Store and the residence of John and Frances Glessner, both completed posthumously in the same year, 1887. Both were well designed to resist combustion and both were to affect the course of Modernism in the coming century.

*Warren Ashworth*  
*October 2021*

# Nineteenth Century

THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA

VOLUME 41 • NUMBER 2  
FALL 2021

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Cover: Playing cards, c. 1890.  
Photographer unknown.



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## THANK YOU TO OUR PEER REVIEWERS

*Nineteenth Century* would like to acknowledge our peer reviewers. We at the editorial board are, as always, deeply grateful to this group of anonymous scholars who review all our author submissions for accuracy of content and application of up-to-date methods of research and scholarship.



25 Cottage Street, Brookline, Massachusetts, c. 1900. Courtesy of the Brookline Historical Society.

# At Home with H. H. Richardson:

## A VISIT TO THE ARCHITECT'S HOUSE AND STUDIO

*William Tyre*

Henry Hobson Richardson's rambling frame house at 25 Cottage Street in Brookline, Massachusetts, was the center of his domestic and professional worlds for the last twelve years of his life. Fellow architect Peter B. Wight noted the success of this arrangement in an 1886 tribute to his friend, published a month after Richardson's untimely death at the age of 47:

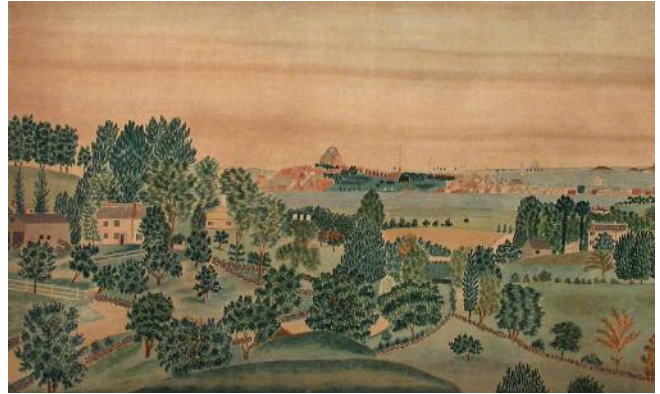
He soon found that he could do his best work in the quiet and retirement of his own home. It was there that he was inspired to conceive the great works with which his name is associated...He was a thoroughly domestic man. He loved his home above all other earthly things. It was a home in which hospitality was dispensed generously, lavishly, in which the whole family joined.<sup>1</sup>

Wight makes two important points. First, Richardson's reputation was established with the commission for Trinity Church in Boston, the oversight of which brought him to Brookline in the spring of 1874. The buildings that strengthened that reputation, including the Marshall Field Wholesale Store and the Allegheny County Courthouse, amongst many others, were all conceived within the walls of his Brookline home.

Second, the blending of his two worlds enabled Richardson's creative process to flow continuously. It was also seen as "a revival of the Medieval custom of having your shop or studio opening out of your living-room, and your apprentices always under your roof and eye."<sup>2</sup>

When necessary, draftsmen were invited to join the family for dinner so they could work late into the evening, or they would visit Richardson in his bedroom when illness confined him to his bed. Wife and children were often enlisted to entertain clients or assist when an inspired idea came to him at an unexpected moment. If Richardson's work life and family life can be compared to arteries and veins, distinct but inseparable, his beloved Brookline home was the heart that pumped life into them.

Brookline, located four miles southwest of downtown Boston, was settled in the 1630s, and prospered as an agrarian-based community until the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when wealthy Bostonians identified its gently rolling landscape as the ideal location for their country houses. One of the first to build there was Senator George Cabot, who purchased an existing house in 1793, renamed it "Green Hill," and immediately enlarged it.<sup>3</sup> The new addition was wrapped by a distinctive two-story porch on three sides, the broad overhanging eaves of the low-pitched roof supported on tall slender square columns. Several houses in the area were soon



Susan Heath, *A View from Heath Hill*, c. 1810. This view shows how easily Boston could be seen from Brookline, supporting the story that Richardson watched the construction of Trinity Church from his bedroom window. Courtesy of the Brookline Historical Society.

built in what became known as the "West Indies style," adopted by Cabot and others who made their fortunes as merchants in the West Indian trade.<sup>4</sup>

In 1803, Cabot sold a parcel of land to Samuel Gardner Perkins, who constructed a summer home, likely starting with a modest 18<sup>th</sup> century house, and enlarging it with a two-story addition across the front, wrapped by a distinctive two-story porch similar to Cabot's. Perkins, born in 1767, was a successful merchant, trading in the West Indies, India, and China. His Brookline estate became known for its fine orchards, including pears, reflecting Perkins's deep interest in horticulture.<sup>5</sup> After Perkins died in 1847, the house was sold to Waldo Maynard, who made significant improvements before selling it to Edward "Ned" Hooper in 1864.<sup>6</sup> Hooper graduated from Harvard with Richardson in 1859, and in 1874 he leased the house to his friend. It would remain in the Richardson family for the next 125 years.

When Richardson received the commission for Trinity Church in June 1872, his office was located in Manhattan. He resided in a Staten Island house he built in 1868, a year after his marriage to the Boston-born Julia Gorham Hayden, her physician father providing most of the funds for construction. Work on the parish house of Trinity Church commenced in March 1874 and two months later, Richardson, his wife, and five children, arrived at their rented Brookline home "where he was surrounded by the friends of his wife and the refined and cultured society whose association and sympathy he craved."<sup>7</sup>

Brookline was populated by men of influence and was one of the wealthiest communities in the United States. The largest



H. H. Richardson in his east parlor office, Brookline, Massachusetts, c. 1880. The chair visible in the foreground was designed by Richardson for his library buildings at Woburn and North Easton, Massachusetts. Courtesy of Houghton Library, Harvard University.

estate in the area, Holm Lea, was located across Cottage Street from Richardson, and was home to merchant Ignatius Sargent and his son Charles, the first director of the Arnold Arboretum. Other neighbors included historian Francis Parkman, engineer Edward Philbrick, and museum founder Isabella Stewart Gardner. Richardson encouraged his former Staten Island neighbor, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, to move to Brookline in 1881. The first country club in the United States, still known simply as The Country Club, was founded there in 1882.<sup>8</sup>

For the first four years Richardson was in the house, he worked out of the west parlor, drawings and documents being sent to and from the New York office. After his partnership with Charles D. Gambrill ended in 1878, the office in New York was closed, and all operations were moved to Brookline.<sup>9</sup> Draftsmen were set up in the west parlor, and Richardson moved into the larger east parlor. He surrounded himself with books, photographs, plaster casts, and decorative objects large and small, “inspiration (being) the key-note of Mr. Richardson’s idea in the student’s training.”<sup>10</sup> A pair of French doors adjacent to Richardson’s desk featured leaded glass

panels designed by his Trinity Church collaborator, John La Farge. Custom made for the room, the center of each door consisted of clear glass so as not to block Richardson’s view of the landscape while seated. The left door displayed a panel showing a hand holding a pair of architectural dividers, an essential tool for an architect.

The arrangement set up in 1878 created issues immediately. The men needed to walk through the family quarters to get to Richardson, and the space allotted to them quickly proved to be too small. Edward Hale, a student in Richardson’s office, noted that even after the office space was increased:

Dividing lines here were vaguely and dimly drawn...The men in the office used respectfully but freely the library, and on occasion invaded the house itself, the old library and even the dining-room with their drawing-boards. The life of the house overflowed continually through the office, bringing always good cheer, and sometimes a sympathy and interest the grace and helpfulness of which are among the happiest, most grateful memories of those who knew them.<sup>11</sup>



E. Eldon Deane, *Exterior of 25 Cottage Street*. Published in the *American Architect and Building News*, December 27, 1884. This is the only known image showing the exterior of the “coops,” which were demolished a few years after Richardson’s death.

Richardson soon planned an extension off the south corner of the east parlor, to contain alcoves for the draftsmen and worktables for students. Two more extensions were added over the next six years, the irregular configuration dictated by the topography. The office wing was severely plain, but functional. From the outside, the simple one-story flat-roofed extension looked like sheds and quickly earned the nickname of the “coops” by its occupants. The feeling inside was quite different:

The interior...was equally simple; but the walls were so covered with photographs and drawings, the outlook through the ample windows, across the lawn to the trees and shrubbery beyond, was so beautiful, that one almost forgot how strictly practical the plan and construction were.<sup>12</sup>

In 1884, Richardson doubled the size of the office wing, adding his library and a large exhibition room where office personnel could post photographs and drawings for discussion. The ample space was also used to host occasional musical performances on Sunday afternoons for friends and family, featuring music by Boston Symphony Orchestra concertmaster Bernhard Listermann among others.<sup>13</sup>

The library measured 25 by 30 feet and was the only portion of the building constructed of brick, providing a fireproof home for Richardson’s valuable collection of books and other objects.

Everything about it is on the largest possible scale, in keeping with the large physique, not less than the large minded generosity, of the owner.<sup>14</sup>

Although designed as his private retreat, Richardson made it fully available to everyone in the office, one assistant noting that



The east parlor of 25 Cottage Street, Brookline, Massachusetts, showing the leaded glass windows by John La Farge. Photo by Steve Rosenthal, c. 1990. Courtesy of Heidi Richardson.

this room was a magic source of inspiration, and in the long winter months it was the retreat for all during noon hours.<sup>15</sup>

Draftsmen and students were free to borrow books and photographs, and Richardson enjoyed seeing what they selected, as it gave him a sense of their design aesthetic.

The library was also designed to create the perfect environment in which to meet with clients, one draftsman going so far as to suggest that Richardson was leading them into his “trap.”<sup>16</sup> John and Frances Glessner, who engaged Richardson to design their new home in Chicago, visited Brookline after several failed attempts to get Richardson to visit them at their summer estate in New Hampshire. A late summer letter from Richardson was typical, noting “I can explain myself and my work so much better with everything at hand.”<sup>17</sup> His insistence that they come to him had an unexpected benefit – the Glessners left behind a valuable record of Richardson’s home and studio.

The Glessners arrived at the Richardson house on September 27, 1885, noting “the house is an old rambling house of frame and very interesting.”<sup>18</sup> The two-day visit was packed with activity including a tour of the house, Sunday dinner with the entire family, a carriage drive through Brookline and Chestnut Hill, introductions to Frederick Law Olmsted and Francis Parkman, dinner at The Country Club, a tour of Trinity Church and rectory, and considerable time spent reviewing plans in Richardson’s library. Nearly thirty years later, John Glessner wrote his impressions of that room:

His private office was a large and beautiful room, with just enough disorder always to be pleasing, with stacks of fine books, with rare and beautiful objects scattered over shelves and tables, a great fireplace in one end before which, with back against a large table, was a deep and most comfortable lounge or couch. This was designed in

his office especially for him – he was an exceedingly large man. In this room was the largest table I ever saw – 12 feet long – so long and so wide that the maid could dust it only by getting on and sweeping the top with a broom. With the exception of a band of mahogany all round it 18 inches wide, it was covered with carpeting on which were most lovely articles of vertu, some magnificent great books, and the useful implements of his trade.

The room had an open timbered ceiling of hard pine and plaster. The span was long and the timbers correspondingly heavy, consequently there came some rather broad season checks even before the room was finished. Richardson found workmen on ladders putting up the check splits. ‘The way I yanked them down from there,’ he said, ‘was a caution. God Almighty made those checks he said. Don’t you dare to fill them up.’ And they didn’t dare. This is the room I liked the best.<sup>19</sup>

After their visit, Richardson gave the Glessners three photographs of his library, and its influence can be seen in the library he designed for their Chicago home. Similarities include the large central desk, the sofa facing the fireplace, mid-height bookcases, and the beamed ceiling (the Glessners also leaving their check splits unfilled). The idea of applying gold leaf to the plaster panels of Richardson’s ceiling was adapted for use in the Glessners’ dining room.

Richardson and Frances Glessner were both deeply interested in the work of William Morris and William De Morgan, Richardson having visited both men during his 1882 trip to Europe. She noted “Peacock and Dragon” portieres by Morris & Co. flanking the library fireplace, De Morgan tiles above the mantel, and a pair of De Morgan vases on the mantel shelf.<sup>20</sup> For her own home, she selected the same “Peacock and Dragon” pattern for the drapes and portieres of the main hall,



L to R: Interior of H. H. Richardson’s office wing, showing student worktables and the exhibition room, c. 1885. Richardson is seated with his back to the camera; H. H. Richardson’s library, c. 1880. Photos courtesy of Historic New England.





L to R: Richardson's bedroom walls were covered in cork panels arranged in a chevron pattern. Also visible is the elaborate ceiling decoration and the rings from which straps hung over his bed. Photo by Steve Rosenthal, c. 1990. Courtesy of Heidi Richardson; H. H. Richardson's bathroom, which once held his enormous bathtub at the rear, where wood wainscoting is visible. Photo by Dana Salvo, n.d. Courtesy of Historic New England.

De Morgan tiles for the fireplaces in her bedroom and a guestroom, and a large De Morgan vase for the parlor.

While visiting the United States in 1885, English artist Hubert von Herkomer approached Richardson about painting his portrait. Richardson declined, noting that he had no money to pay for it. The two entered into an agreement whereby Herkomer would paint the portrait in exchange for Richardson designing the exterior of his proposed house in England. The library was selected for the setting, Richardson surrounded by some of his favorite objects, but oddly enough, nothing indicating his profession. Of particular note is the large, framed photo of the equestrian statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni by Andrea del Verrochio in Venice, which looms over his left shoulder.<sup>21</sup> Herkomer painted the portrait on "the largest canvas he could find" over a series of eight Sundays, while his father played the zither.<sup>22</sup>

The Glessners were impressed with the dining room, the room where clients often mingled with the Richardson family. Richardson's daughter Julia noted that the room also hosted members of a local dining club. The round table had interchangeable tops that accommodated 12 or 16 persons; the Club table sat 24. "It was magnificent. But everything he did was generous, lavish to a degree."<sup>23</sup> Located in what is believed to be the 18<sup>th</sup> century part of the house, the ceiling was only a little over seven feet in height, four feet shorter than the

adjacent parlor constructed by Perkins in 1803. Despite the blood-red walls, John Glessner wrote:

His dining room was not large and had but one window and that was small, but you cannot imagine a sunnier room. It is a mystery to me now how that was accomplished, but certainly it was a brilliantly sunny room at breakfast time. There was a narrow shelf running around the walls about 20 inches below the ceiling and less than six feet above the floor, and this held a few rare plates and a number of iridescent De Morgan tiles, the gift of Mr. De Morgan himself.<sup>24</sup>

Beyond including the children in meals with his clients, Richardson found other ways to engage them in his work, and it had a lasting impact. His two youngest sons, Philip and Frederick, both became architects, and his eldest daughter Julia married George F. Shepley, one of the three senior architects who reorganized Richardson's practice after he died. Many years later Julia recalled:

We children, six of us, all felt we shared in his work, even designs, as constantly ideas for a competition would come to him at the dining table, and we would be sent running for paper and pencils, and as we hung over him, he would consult us as to doors and windows, et cetera. We were also called up to entertain the families of clients, as they generally came en masse and stayed to lunch. I



The Richardson children, (l to r): Henry, Mary, Julia, John, Frederick, and Phillip, c. 1883. Courtesy of Henry Hobson Richardson IV.

was my father's frequent companion when he drove his pair of fine horses in a Goddard buggy to inspect his buildings in Cambridge and Boston. He always had some of us children with him and we reveled in it, he was so gay and full of fun.<sup>25</sup>

The Glessners' final visit with Richardson took place on February 11, 1886. He was not well enough to leave his bed, so they were taken to his bedroom, an extraordinary room Richardson had built over the west parlor. The stairs to this room were separated from the main staircase by a delicate wooden spindle screen inspired by Middle Eastern design. The space was washed in a soft golden light provided by three windows high above the stairs, filled with small panes of chipped glass, their faceted surface refracting the sunlight and sparkling like jewels. The Glessners noted the windows and later had a copy of one installed in the door of their main hall.

Of the bedroom and adjacent bathroom, John Glessner wrote:

I found him in his bedroom – a particularly interesting room by the way. Its walls were covered with cork, very soft and pleasing in appearance and texture, the object being that fresh sketches or prints might be put up daily with thumb tacks. Over the bed were two large rings depending from straps from the ceiling so placed that by grasping them he could the more easily turn over. His bath tub was unusually large and had two steps inside and two outside and these were necessary for his convenience.<sup>26</sup>

Daughter Julia noted that the square bathtub was at least four feet deep and had a knotted rope hanging from the ceiling to assist her father. "Later, as a great treat, the children were allowed to use the tub as a swimming pool."<sup>27</sup>

The ceiling of the bedroom was paneled in wood with inset

canvas panels of quatrefoils and eight-pointed stars, the latter common in Middle Eastern design. An analysis conducted in 2000 revealed that the original surfaces were most likely varnished oak with gold leaf on the canvas.<sup>28</sup> An inglenook on the northeast side of the room surrounded two large windows. From this vantage point, Richardson could watch for visitors arriving at the foot of his driveway. More importantly, he would have been able to watch the construction of Trinity Church, approximately two miles away, in the Back Bay area of Boston.

It was in this room that Richardson died on April 27, 1886. He was deeply in debt, his assets consisting mostly of amounts due from clients, and his architectural books and drawings. His architectural office was reorganized as Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, and new offices were secured in downtown Boston.<sup>29</sup> The partners provided his widow with the commissions from all buildings he left incomplete at his death. She purchased the house from Ned Hooper, demolished the office wing by the early 1890s, and remained there until her death in 1914.

In 1906, a son, Henry Hyslop Richardson, moved into the house where he and wife Elizabeth raised their three children. Their son, Henry Hobson Richardson III, was born there in 1907, raising his own family in the home, and dying in 1998,

after which the house was put up for sale. It has not been occupied since that time, and a complicated series of events has resulted in the current threat to the building, with an 18-month demolition delay due to expire in June 2022. The Brookline Preservation Commission is currently pursuing the establishment of a landmark district to protect the house, a vital and irreplaceable link to one of America's greatest 19<sup>th</sup> century architects.



**William Tyre** is a native of Chicago and has served as Executive Director and Curator of Glessner House since October 2007. He received his M.A. in Historic Preservation from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he wrote his thesis, *After the Ball is Over: The Decline and Rebirth of Chicago's Historic Prairie Avenue Neighborhood*. In 2008, the thesis was reworked and published by Arcadia Publishing as *Chicago's Historic Prairie Avenue*. He serves on the board of Friends of Historic Second Church, which oversees the restoration and interpretation of Second Presbyterian Church, Chicago's only individually listed National Historic Landmark church. He resides in a restored manager's house in the Town of Pullman, designated a National Monument in 2013.

## Notes

1. P. B. Wight, "H. H. Richardson," *The Inland Architect and Builder* 7, no. 7 (May 1886): 59, 61.
2. "Studio and Office of Mr. H. H. Richardson, Architect, Brookline, Mass.," *The American Architect and Building News* 16, no. 470 (December 27, 1884): 304.
3. Nina Fletcher Little, *Some Old Brookline Houses* (Brookline: The Brookline Historical Society, 1949), 73. Cabot's great-grandson was the well-known U. S. Senator, Henry Cabot Lodge. The name Green Hill was later adopted for the entire neighborhood which includes Richardson's house.
4. Little, *Some Old Brookline Houses*, 61.
5. Little, *Some Old Brookline Houses*, 63-65.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Wight, "H. H. Richardson," 59.
8. James F. O'Gorman, *Selected Drawings, H. H. Richardson and His Office* (Cambridge: Harvard College, 1974), 3-4.
9. Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, *H. H. Richardson Complete Architectural Works* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1982), 114 and 192.
10. "Studio and Office," 304.
11. Edward Hale, "H. H. Richardson and His Work," *The New England Magazine* 11 (December 1894): 515.
12. Hale, "H. H. Richardson," 513-514.
13. James F. O'Gorman, *Living Architecture: A Biography of H. H. Richardson* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997): 155.
14. Wight, "H. H. Richardson," 60.
15. A. O. Elzner, "A Reminiscence of Richardson," *Inland Architect* 20 (September 1892), 15.
16. Welles Bosworth, "I Knew H. H. Richardson," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 16, no. 3 (September 1951): 118.
17. H. H. Richardson, letter to J. J. Glessner, Esq., 26 Aug. 1885.
18. Journal of Frances Glessner, October 2, 1885.
19. John J. Glessner, "For Contemplated Paper on Richardson," unpublished manuscript, 1914, Glessner House.
20. The author wishes to thank Dr. Christopher Jordan for his assistance in identifying the De Morgan pieces in the Richardson library, including the Rose and Scroll tiles.
21. James F. O'Gorman, *Some Architects' Portraits in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2013): 56-59. The statue was apparently a favorite of Richardson, as he acquired several photographs after seeing it during his 1882 trip.
22. Julia Richardson Shepley, "Reminiscences," unpublished manuscript, undated, Houghton Library, Harvard University: 5-6. The portrait hung in the Brookline home until the 1990s; it was later given to the National Portrait Gallery where it is on permanent display. Richardson's widow provided the Glessners with a heliotype copy of the portrait which remains on display in their home.
23. Shepley, "Reminiscences," 4.
24. Glessner, "Contemplated Paper."
25. Shepley, "Reminiscences," 2. The family counts numerous architects amongst subsequent generations.
26. Glessner, "Contemplated Paper." The Glessners had a "cork alcove" installed in their home to display prints and drawings, no doubt inspired by the walls in Richardson's bedroom.
27. Shepley, "Reminiscences," 6.
28. Susan L. Buck, "Conditions Assessment of Interior Architectural Materials," prepared for the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 2000.
29. The firm survives today as Shepley Bulfinch. Still based in Boston, it is one of the oldest continuously operating architectural firms in the United States.



Edward Lamson Henry (1841-1919), *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*, 1867. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Bequest of Moses Tanenbaum (39.47.1).

# Railroad Ties:

## EDWARD LAMSON HENRY, *THE 9:45 A.M. ACCOMMODATION* IN CONTEXT AND THE COMMISSION BY JOHN TAYLOR JOHNSTON

Valerie Ann Leeds

The 1867 panoramic masterwork by Edward Lamson Henry (1841-1919), *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*, is one of the artist's most recognizable paintings and is in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is a grand and spellbinding composition in its detail and multiple storylines, which I first saw on the museum walls many years ago. It reflects Henry's mastery as one of the premier American genre painters and it is additionally of great significance as a painting celebrating the impact of the railroad on American life. It was painted by the artist at the tender age of twenty-six and the work was a commission by the eminent railroad magnate, art collector, and philanthropist, John Taylor Johnston (1820-1893). Johnston was a founder of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and served as the institution's first president. The commission for a painting by a collector and railroad industrialist such as Johnston that so closely aligned with his business interests made it a noteworthy addition to what was considered the foremost private art collection of the period. Furthermore, it was the only commission that Johnston was known to have made. This singular act of patronage greatly impacted the nascent career of the young artist, effectively securing his status and fueling his recognition as a modern realist genre painter with a specialty in transportation themes, especially of railroad subjects.<sup>1</sup> By means of a circuitous route, the painting eventually entered the permanent collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>2</sup>

The Johnston painting is well known, and yet, the origins of the work and the commission have not been explored and warrant further consideration in light of an oil painting Henry executed three years earlier that can be now identified as having been shown at the 1864 National Academy of Design (NAD) annual, as *The Railroad Depot* (later retitled *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation, Stratford, CT*). This 1864 painting and a related drawing will be examined as sources for the 1867 Johnston commission. Johnston, by his professional affiliation, and Henry, because of his production of a number of railroad paintings, had a shared interest in the railroad with the progressive social possibilities it offered. This article delves into the painting, related works, its context, and outlines the probable circumstances of the commission, which was greatly informed by identifying these antecedents, as will become evident.

Edward Lamson Henry was a Southerner by birth, born in Charleston, South Carolina, but he moved North at the age of seven to live with relatives in New York City when he was orphaned. He studied art at the Pennsylvania Academy of the

Fine Arts, and continued instruction in Paris in 1860 with Charles Gleyre (1806-1874) and Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) and then traveled in Europe before returning back to America in 1862.<sup>3</sup> Henry had his first painting accepted by the NAD in the 1861 annual, when he was only twenty years old. He became a frequent exhibitor at the academy throughout his life, often with more than one work. He was elected an associate in 1867, the same year he completed the Johnston commission, and was named an academician in 1869.<sup>4</sup> He lived the better part of his adult life in New York, and in 1884, he designed and built a home at Cragmoor, near the upstate New York town of Ellenville, where he became the guiding force in establishing Cragmoor as an art colony.<sup>5</sup> Cragmoor is a hamlet in



The home of Edward Lamson Henry (1841-1919), c. 1900. Cragmoor, New York. Published in Elizabeth McCausland's *The Life and Works of E L Henry*, 1945. Photographer unknown. Courtesy New York State Museum Library, Albany.

southern Ulster County, which is perched atop the Shawangunk Ridge, affording stunning elevated vistas of the surrounding mountains and valleys. It was and still remains picturesque and rustic and the centerpiece of the community is the old Stone Church, a circa-1897 castle-inspired structure surrounded by wooded areas. Among other notable artists who were subsequently drawn to the Cragmoor summer art colony were Charles Courtney Curran, Edward Gay, Helen Turner, George Inness, Jr., and Arthur Parton, and to this day, it



Edward Lamson Henry (1841-1919), *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation, Stratford, CT, 1864*. Oil on wood panel. The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art. © Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation.

continues to draw artists and artisans. Cragmoor remained a touchstone for Henry throughout his life and he split his time between his residence in Cragmoor and a studio he maintained in New York City.<sup>6</sup> Despite his Southern roots, he became associated with painting Northern subjects, particularly of his Upstate surroundings, and Cragmoor and its environs provided him with an abundance of his subject matter. Besides the train paintings, he actually produced a wide array of subjects and also pictured locales farther afield. His works are most often meticulously detailed genre scenes, but he was also known to paint recent historical events and nostalgic recreations.

Henry was fascinated with all forms of transportation, which became the dominant theme of his oeuvre. He frequently represented traditional conveyances such as horse-drawn carts, buggies, carriages, as well as boats and bicycles, many of which he collected, but railroad subjects were undoubtedly his most successful theme.<sup>7</sup> As Samuel Isham later noted of Henry's work,

no one else knows as well as he the manners and customs of an age which has become old-fashioned, but hardly as yet historic; the first half of the last century, when travel was by stagecoach or packet-boats on the canal, when railroads were strange innovations of doubtful merit...He knows...the country of the time.<sup>8</sup>

*The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation* was instrumental in Henry

achieving success and becoming revered as a leading practitioner of genre painting in his day.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Precursors to E. L. Henry, *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation* and the Early Response to the Railroad**

The introduction of the train locomotive to America in the 1830s revolutionized many aspects of life in this country.<sup>10</sup> Thought to be one of the earliest published literary descriptions of a railroad, Henry David Thoreau's poetic tribute in *Walden* to this new technology, signaled a new theme in literature and art of the period that was to become increasingly prevalent. Unlike E. L. Henry whose train compositions celebrate trains and the railroad in at least eight paintings, Thoreau and many other artists and writers of the period expressed ambivalence in their work, showing that railroads had the potential for destruction, but they represented an advance and were emblematic of the American industrial revolution. As he wrote in 1854:

The whistle of the locomotive penetrates my woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer's yard, informing me that many restless city merchants are arriving within the circle of the town, or adventurous traders from the other side. Here come your groceries, country; your nations, countrymen. Nor is there any man so independent on his farm that he can say them nay.<sup>11</sup>



George Inness (1825-1894), *The Lackawanna Valley*, c. 1855. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

The writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne ten years earlier also reference the railroad, although he articulates stronger objections to the resulting intrusion of the railroad on the landscape, when he wrote that

...the whistle of the locomotive—the long shriek, harsh, above all other harshness, for the space of a mile cannot mollify it into harmony. It tells a story of busy men, citizens from the hot street, who have come to spend a day in a country village, men of business; in short, of all unquietness; and no wonder that it gives such a startling shriek, since it brings the noisy world into the midst of our slumbrous peace.<sup>12</sup>

Hawthorne emphasizes that the connectivity between regions and the rural and the urban came at a price—the loss of peace and tranquility. The primary consequence of the train and the railroad system was the connecting of remote and rural areas to urban centers. The rapid transformation from a provincial to an industrial society came about as a result of more than thirty thousand miles of railroad track that were laid between 1830 and 1860, establishing the “Iron Horse” as a national symbol of modernization and progress.<sup>13</sup>

The construction of railroad depots also contributed to



Frances Flora Bond Palmer (1812-1876), *The “Lightning Express” Trains*, 1863. Lithograph. Published by Currier & Ives. Courtesy Mabel Brady Garvan Collection. Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT.

change by altering the face of smaller cities and towns by creating a hub, which served as the primary source for news, local gossip, transport of people and goods, and the heart of social and mercantile exchange.<sup>14</sup> Thoreau commented on this aspect of change resulting from the railroad:

Far through unfrequented woods on the confines of towns where once only the hunter penetrated by day, in the darkest night dart these bright saloons without the knowledge of their inhabitants; this moment stopping at some brilliant station house in town or city, where a social crowd is gathered...the startings and arrivals of the cars are now the epochs in the village day.<sup>15</sup>

Some constituencies depicted railroads as destroyers of nature, both physically and metaphorically. The primary objections to the railroad resulted from concerns for the resulting desecration of the pastoral countryside, alteration to picturesque villages sliced through by the construction of tracks, and the noise and intrusiveness on the solitude of rural life.<sup>16</sup>

As with Thoreau and Hawthorne, the works of many artists depicting the railroad also referenced conflicted sentiments about the destruction of nature that involved the cutting down of trees and the laying down of track, the invasion of the pristine countryside, while at the same time, bringing progress and access to small towns. The conflict about art and progress was encapsulated in an 1853 *Putnam's Monthly* article that stated,

In the United States, Thomas Cole, Jasper Cropsey, Thomas Doughty, Asher B. Durand, Robert Havel, George Inness, John F. Kensett, and Thomas P. Rossiter, were prominent among the artists who painted railroad themes between the mid-1840s and the mid-1860s, the major period of the railroad revolution. These artists tended to romanticize the railroad as represented within the landscape scenes by picturing the trains and the railroad placed far into the distance, only suggesting the industrial incursion by means of the metaphorical shorthand symbol of tree stumps dotting the foreground and surroundings. The trains are often barely visible and are called to attention by a puff of smoke, as exemplified by Inness's *The Lackawanna Valley*, but also evident in numerous other roughly contemporaneous examples.<sup>18</sup> In other cases, the train and tracks were shown running near what was unspoiled landscape, or through bucolic fields or farmland, intimating the impact on the sylvan countryside.<sup>19</sup>

Taken together, however, none of these artists exhibited the same degree of interest in train subjects as Henry, whose oeuvre includes a group of paintings specifically focused on trains and depots.<sup>20</sup> From Henry's first depiction of the railroad in 1864, his images are distinct from those of others in their



William Powell Frith (1819-1909), *The Railway Station*, 1862. Oil on canvas. Royal Holloway, University of London.

...picture galleries, pyramids and railroads were never intended for the same people and the same century. If we have one we must forgo the other, and we are sensible of our good fortune in living in an age which gives preference to railroads.<sup>17</sup>

Railroads became an increasingly common motif in the art and literature of the second half of the nineteenth century in America as well as in Great Britain.

enthusiasm, spotlighting the locomotives and highlighting this technology in multiple canvases.<sup>21</sup> His representations reflect no hesitancy about the introduction of this technological and industrial advance. He focuses on the energy and commerce that the railroad brought to small-town life. His railway images concentrate on close-up views of the trains, depots, and the bustle of accompanying human activity. The prominence of the locomotive in the Johnston version demarcates the left side of the composition as the realm dedicated to this modern conveyance, and the horse-drawn vehicles to the right.



Juxtaposing the new against the old—the Iron Horse versus the traditional modes of transportation—Henry’s painting features this industrial advance and its social potential.

Despite the disapproval of some artists and cultural observers, railroads in America were quickly welcomed by the public for the added accessibility and positive impact exerted on business, commerce, travel, and transport. Convenience and timesaving were its principal enticements, and it eventually became a national mania. As noted by Thomas Cooley in 1889:

Every man in the land is interested daily and constantly in railroads and transportation of person and property over them. The price of whatever he eats, or wears, or uses, the cost and comfort of travel, the speed and convenience with which he shall receive his mail and the current intelligence of the day, and even the intimacy and extent of his social relations, are all largely affected thereby.<sup>22</sup>

precedents for American artists, especially in works that picture railroads, and most certainly in Henry’s railroad paintings. The introduction of the railroad in Britain created many of the same dilemmas and advantages for society there as in America, and the subject was similarly manifested in the culture and art of the era. Paintings involving rail travel were particularly popular in Britain and formed a distinct corpus of genre painting.<sup>24</sup> A forerunner to E. L. Henry’s *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation* can be seen in the work of the nineteenth-century British artist, William Powell Frith (1819-1901), whose intricate, large-scale panoramas chronicled and satirized aspects of nineteenth-century British society, most especially his most notable vast tableau, *The Railway Station* (1862). The peak of Frith’s success and fame was attained with this work, which garnered popular recognition for him through extensive exhibition and press notices and large engraving subscriptions. It was one of three major railroad subjects he produced. The painting, a scene of Paddington Station that includes a detailed



Edward Lamson Henry (1841-1919), *The Station on the Morris and Essex Railroad*, c. 1864. Oil on canvas. Courtesy JP Morgan Chase Art Collection.

The figurative vignettes within Henry’s detailed genre paintings, notably the two *9:45 a.m. Accommodation* paintings, illustrates how the railroad benefitted smaller communities, transporting people and goods, mail, and boosting local community development and trade, and by linking smaller and rural towns to larger economic centers. Henry was the first American artist to represent this perspective.<sup>23</sup>

British Victorian genre painting provided important

typing of British society, provoked much discussion, and was widely disseminated through engravings.<sup>25</sup>

Distinct parallels can be seen between Frith’s *The Railway Station*, and Henry’s two versions of *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*. Frith received substantial publicity for the commission, and the subsequent unveiling of the painting received coverage in the *Illustrated London News*.<sup>26</sup> There exists the strong possibility that through the publicity or the engravings, which were distributed in America, that John Taylor Johnston had been familiar with the painting and may

have seen the opportunity to commission his own American counterpart to *The Railway Station*.<sup>27</sup> It is also probable that Henry was aware of Frith's monumental railroad tour-de-force as he depicted a similar subject and a complex, highly detailed composition that was also a study in social typing. While it is not known whether Henry knew Frith's painting, the affinity between Henry and Frith was indeed not lost on Henry's American audience, for in fact during his lifetime, he was also called the "Frith of America."<sup>28</sup>

### ***The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation:* The Original Painting and the Larger Commissioned Painting**

As noted, Henry created two finished paintings that both have now come to be known as *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*. An accommodation train is a passenger train making all local stops on the way to a larger urban destination, and it was also the source of package delivery in the nineteenth century, although the phrase has become largely obsolete.<sup>29</sup> Nonetheless, neither of these two works interestingly originally bore this title (see note 37 for an extended discussion of the titles of both paintings). The first painting, now in the collection of Florida's Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, was Henry's first railroad painting, and was completed in 1864. It is an oil on panel that measures 12½" x 20." The second, an oil on canvas, was completed in 1867 expressly for John Taylor Johnston and measures considerably larger, 16" x 30 ⅞" and now belongs to The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In the Johnston painting, Henry's technical proficiency in presenting a complex compositional structure and a dense, multilayered narrative is plainly on display. The formal configuration of the painting suggests an underlying geometric framework that is balanced and carefully conceived; the left side of the painting roughly mirrors the right, with the suggestion of horizontal divisions by means of the visual alignment of various elements. The composition converges in a central vanishing point beyond the station. The viewer is led throughout the painting, entering the composition in the left foreground with the well-dressed man and woman escorting their children toward the train. The action cleverly draws the viewer to the locomotive, and at the same time infuses the composition with a sense of clockwise movement and establishes the narrative. The locomotive that is seen in the left foreground of the painting is a principal focal point. The details are so carefully delineated that the fuel source in the tender—cordwood—and the locomotive, which is a Rogers 4-4-0 steam locomotive, can be identified.<sup>30</sup> The railroad depot is a secondary focus; it is board-and-batten construction, typical of Gothic Revival wooden-frame architecture of the period with a gabled roof and decorative bargeboard. Two-story railroad stations, built in this style, were common to the Northeast region, particularly New England.<sup>31</sup> A sign suspended from the overhang indicates a 9:45 departure for the train. There are legible posters adorning the station wall that are painted with microscopic accuracy announcing an agricultural fair, a wanted man, a sheriff's sale (a public auction), and a trotting race. In front to the right of that are two white horses harnessed to an

open carriage that are tended by a Black attendant. The bolting horses have been frightened by the clanging bell and the din of the arriving train, all contributing to the dramatic energy of the tableau. To the left of them is a small barking dog, also possibly agitated by the commotion of the inbound train.

The right side of the composition is populated with horses, carriages, open carts, and animals, in front of an embankment crowned with a white picket fence, and homes interspersed with trees. Minute portraits include a woman with a parasol accompanied by a small girl and a dog strolling alongside the fence and a man sitting in the window of the house looking out on the scene. A sign posted on the embankment reads "Railroad Crossing Lookout."

The middle foreground is strewn with wood, railroad ties, and equipment. In the center, trunks and crates are possibly awaiting loading onto the train. Beyond the double set of tracks to the left side of the composition there are three children who are attracted by the whirl of activity: two boys and a girl who appear to be local residents who have come to witness the spectacle of the arrival and departure of the train. Their attire is not as fine as the two children accompanying the adults on their way to catch the train probably destined for the city. Beyond them a river is evident with blooming trees surrounded in the background with hilly terrain.

Figural groupings populate the area in and around the train in the composition, each creating a small vignette of everyday life and suggesting a discrete narrative. There are two engineers inside the locomotive who converse with two Union soldiers on the platform—one is on crutches and another is seated on a barrel. The soldiers serve as a pointed reminder of the recently concluded Civil War. In the passenger cars, numerous dramas are being played out. Two male figures load and unload baggage from the first car. Farther back a Black nursemaid attempts to control two young charges. In the center, two men lean against the supporting post of the railroad depot while reading a newspaper. Masses of other figures are disembarking from the train onto the platform that fade into the distance. To the right of center and parked to the right of the buggy is an open cart drawn by a single black horse, which is being handled by the driver. The cart is hauling goods that include a wicker basket, and two wicker-covered bottles. Two women approach the stairs of the depot. They are dressed in bonnets and capes, and one holds a parasol. Two additional dogs wander in the right foreground near an open oxcart pulled by two oxen, facing away from the viewer. Three other horse-and-buggies approach and depart from the street-front side of the depot with numerous passengers. To the right edge of the painting, an African American man is driving an oxcart with a young boy sitting in the truck facing outward toward the viewer and next to him sits a shovel alluding to their physical labor. Next to them is a peddler's cart with pots and pans with a man facing the embankment. These painstakingly delineated scenes represent a broad cross section of society at the time and offer a multitude of cues about social class.

Regarding the soldiers, Henry was known to have a deep-seated interest in the Civil War, as well as a broad perspective informed by his Southern roots and his residence in New York.



Edward Lamson Henry (1841-1919), *First Railroad Train on the Hudson and Mohawk Railroad*, 1892-93. Oil on canvas. The Albany Institute of History and Art, New York. Gift of the Friends of the Institute through Catherine Gansevoort Lansing.

His sympathies were with the North, but he later recalled that he went to Virginia “just to see what I could see.” He also served as a clerk on a quartermaster supply ship during October and November 1864.<sup>32</sup> In both versions of *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*, African American subjects as well as references to Union soldiers are made. It can be surmised that his sympathies were with the Union Army and its cause by the sympathetic representation of soldiers in these paintings.

The precise location pictured in this work has not been able to be determined. The painting mysteriously became associated with Stratford, Connecticut, although there is no concrete evidence tying the painting to that location. It is more likely inspired by a locale in New York, if it is a real place, as the title of the painting, when it was placed at auction in 1876, still owned by Johnston and during Henry’s lifetime, denoted that it was Westchester County.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the sympathetic portrayals of African Americans were executed at a time where the matter of slavery in New York had been long settled. Henry had often included African Americans in his genre paintings, and his somewhat idealized portrayals were in some cases based on travels back down South, but others, as in this case, were based on Northern subjects.<sup>34</sup> The railroad, which so prominently featured in both paintings, was to also figure significantly in Northern Reconstruction and during this period of postwar renewal.

Henry painted the two versions of *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation* in the Tenth Street Studio building in New York, where he maintained a second floor studio from 1863 to 1885. The Tenth Street Studio Building coincidentally had a remote connection to John Taylor Johnston, as his brother, James Boorman Johnston developed and built this singularly important venue that housed artists and their studios in a collaboration with architect William Morris Hunt who kept his office there. In the 1870s, Johnston turned the building over to his brother, John Taylor Johnston.<sup>35</sup>



Edward Lamson Henry, (1841-1919), sketch for *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*, n.d. Pencil on paper. Henry Archive, New York State Museum, Albany.

### A Case of Mistaken Identity

Scholars have traditionally ascribed another composition, *The Station on the Morris and Essex Railroad* as Henry’s first railroad painting, suggesting that it was painted in 1864. That painting is, however, undated and the only evidence for that date is a photograph of the work contained in the Henry archive album with a handwritten inscription on the verso: “Old Station at South Orange, N.J., 1864,” from an unknown hand.<sup>36</sup>

Likewise, it has been previously and incorrectly assumed that *The Station on the Morris and Essex Railroad* was the work exhibited at the 1864 NAD spring annual as *The Railroad Depot*.<sup>37</sup> A complimentary review of the 1864 annual, however, describes specific details that are absent from *The Station on the Morris and Essex Railroad*, but are in fact clearly delineated in the rediscovered 1864 Morse Museum panel painting:



Edward Lamson Henry (1841-1919), *The Camden and Amboy Railroad with the Engine "Planet" in 1834, 1904*. Oil on canvas. Courtesy Frye Art Museum.

E. L. Henry, whose smaller pictures of architecture have heretofore elicited our favorable notice, has this year a very spirited "Railroad Depot" (56); excellent for its general harmony of idea, and full of hurried but uncrowded movement. The breezy scud above is in artistic sympathy with the puffing locomotive, frightened horses and hurried passengers; and there are numerous capital bits of character-painting in the groups of the foreground.<sup>38</sup>

*The Station on the Morris and Essex Railroad* contains no frightened horses and the placement of the locomotive is so far in the distance as to be barely evident; these features are, however, readily apparent in the Morse Museum painting. Additionally, Henry's inscription on the panel verso of the Morse Museum painting reads "April 1864," affirms that he completed this work in time for the 1864 academy spring annual, which opened April 15 of that year. Furthermore, it was customary for artists to enter and show newly completed works right off the easel, which would be the case in this instance.

Since it was the 1864 Morse Museum painting that was clearly the work exhibited at the NAD, John Taylor Johnston would have had an opportunity to see the painting there while on public view, and the railroad theme would have certainly been of particular interest to him. It can be concluded that Johnston likely commissioned Henry to create a larger replica for his collection. In the idiom of contemporary and historical genre painting, Henry often scrupulously synthesized several different realistic images into a single composite, as he did with Johnston's version of the painting with subtle compositional alterations. The work can therefore be traced back in its

derivation to the Morse Museum painting.

### **The Evolution of a Modern Genre Painting**

Henry's submission of the 1864 painting from the Morse Museum to the 1864 NAD annual may have been motivated by a choice to demonstrate a progressive outlook about life in the modern industrial era—and in his presenting himself as a painter of modern genre subjects—an idea to which he was surely introduced while in France.<sup>39</sup> The painting is exacting in its realism, with detail that suggests the influence of French realist painter, Ernest Meissonier, whom Henry viewed "as the greatest artist of his time," and it should also be noted that Henry was often called the "Meissonier of America."<sup>40</sup>

The painting harks back to an undated drawing whose fluid and sketchy draftsmanship suggests that it was done from life.<sup>41</sup> Changes from the drawing to the subsequent transcriptions in paint include expanding the subject and the proportions of the railroad depot moving it off center. In the drawing, the passenger cars of the train are angled toward the compositional center, as they are in the paintings, but the most pronounced difference is that the caboose is the focal point of the drawing, which lacks the locomotive, signifying that the train would be traveling in the opposite direction than as pictured in both paintings. The drawing also has a more static quality than the paintings with its absence of a locomotive. In the paintings, the locomotives and the noise that arises from them and the active smokestacks suggest in each work that the train has just arrived for a brief stop before departing, as the horses start and figures are running to catch the train, creating a sense of movement and energy. The paintings feature the locomotive

while also introducing human narratives. In the drawing, various figures are seen on the platform waving to departing passengers, and are a different cast of characters, arranged differently than in the paintings, although the figures reading the newspaper at the edge of the depot can be seen in both the drawing as well as the paintings. Also, in the drawing, a single horse shown in front of the depot with various horse-drawn carriages on the right side of the composition, are carried over into the two subsequent paintings and are increasingly prominent in each version. Trees and some mountainous elevations are lightly sketched in the background of the drawing, but lack the fuller description of the paintings.

The 1864 painting evolved from the drawing into a minutely detailed panoramic scene of a train arriving at a depot that offers a broader social context. To the left foreground, a man and a woman have been added, seen with their bags dashing toward the large locomotive exuding smoke. There is a single injured Union soldier on crutches, on the platform, speaking with the engineer, which denotes the specific Civil War time period. Evident to the left, beyond the double set of tracks is fenced land with red buildings in place of the stream pictured in the later painting from 1867. The figures and houses along the embankment are more countrified, appearing less grand than in the larger composition.

The typing of figures further developed from Henry's 1864 to his 1867 rendition of *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*. The finely-dressed children running for the train with their parents, which have been added in the later work, contrast sharply with the three provincial local children who stand on the other side of the tracks fascinated by the train and departing passengers. The two Union soldiers and the greater prominence of the African Americans point out differences in class and social position by juxtaposing them with those arriving in carriages. The Civil War was still underway when Henry painted the initial work, highlighted by the inclusion of the injured soldier, and the artist interestingly represents a racially and economically diverse group boarding and surrounding the train. These elements are also present in the Johnston commission, which may have been in accordance with the patron's wishes. Johnson clearly had cultivated artistic taste, evident in the exceptional works he acquired for his vast art collection that included such works as Joseph Mallord William Turner's *The Slave Ship* and Winslow Homer's *Prisoners on the Front*, among many others.

More figures and expanded narratives have been added and emphasized in the larger 1867 painting. The subtle elements of social distinction of the 1864 painting in the rendering of the Union soldier, train engineer, middle-class travelers, and businessmen, become more fully realized in the larger painting of three years later after the Civil War had ended and while Reconstruction was underway. In fact, the later painting served as an illustration for an 1868 issue of *Harper's Weekly* that was dedicated to the theme of Reconstruction.<sup>42</sup>

Henry painted scenes of everyday life most frequently, and while he dedicated himself to realism, striving to get every detail correct, his works were not necessarily always literal transcriptions from nature. As his wife later recounted,

...he was always searching through the country...sparing no pains or expense in getting all and everything that could help him make his work as perfect as possible; for he always felt and others often said, his paintings would live and be used as references long after he had gone. So, he wanted to make them as perfect and as true to the time they represented as was possible.<sup>43</sup>

Although he was well-known for accurate documentation, Henry largely constructed compositions in his studio, amalgamating several different true-to-life transcriptions drawn from various, sketches, photographs, and drawings.

In his earlier career, Henry was appreciated for the exacting detail of his paintings; however, in the late years, especially in his later railroad paintings well after both versions of the 9:45 paintings were completed, his scenes were generally acknowledged to be nostalgic anachronisms. In an obituary tribute to Henry, the artist Will H. Low stated that

...there are few American artists who have better served their country in preserving for the future the quaint and provincial aspects of a life which has all but disappeared...<sup>44</sup>

Henry continued to paint contemporary genre subjects for some time, although in his late years, he more frequently turned to subjects that were of a historical nature. He capitalized on *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*, which had marked the beginning of his recognition, by producing railroad compositions into his later career, including two major nostalgic efforts—the monumental *First Railroad Train on the Hudson and Mohawk Railroad*, (1892–93), which commemorated an event that took place in 1831, and also *The Camden and Amboy Railroad with the Engine "Planet" in 1834*, (1904). As his wife related:

His subjects were chosen not because others might care for them, but he cared for them himself. The men and women of his canvases seem to move before him as living human beings and were as much alive to him as people of today.<sup>45</sup>

Over a long prolific painting career, Henry met with considerable success and his work sold steadily despite the fact that his manner of painting gradually fell out of vogue.

### **John Taylor Johnston, His Art Collection, and the E. L. Henry Commission**

Johnston, as noted, was a preeminent art collector, cultural leader, and philanthropist, and was president of the New Jersey Central Railroad from 1848 to 1876. He had worked toward establishing a museum in New York which led to his being named the first president of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, a role in which he served from 1870 through 1889.<sup>46</sup> Following in the tradition of Luman Reed, and other wealthy patrons, Johnston amassed an important collection comprised of examples by the most eminent European and American artists, and he also had galleries attached to his home that he opened to the public in an attempt to cultivate taste and interest in art.<sup>47</sup>

Art critics characterized the quality of the collection:

Mr. Johnston's pictures...were selected with such intelligence, that the entire group has a certain unity which more pretentious galleries do not possess. It is a well-balanced collection, and the best names in European and American art are represented by works of nearly uniform quality...The American group of pictures in this gallery is especially interesting. In some sense it may be said to be historical of American art...<sup>48</sup>

In its day, the Johnston collection was considered one of the most important private art collections, but has now been largely forgotten. It was exceptional in the selections, particularly the American works, as another writer observed:

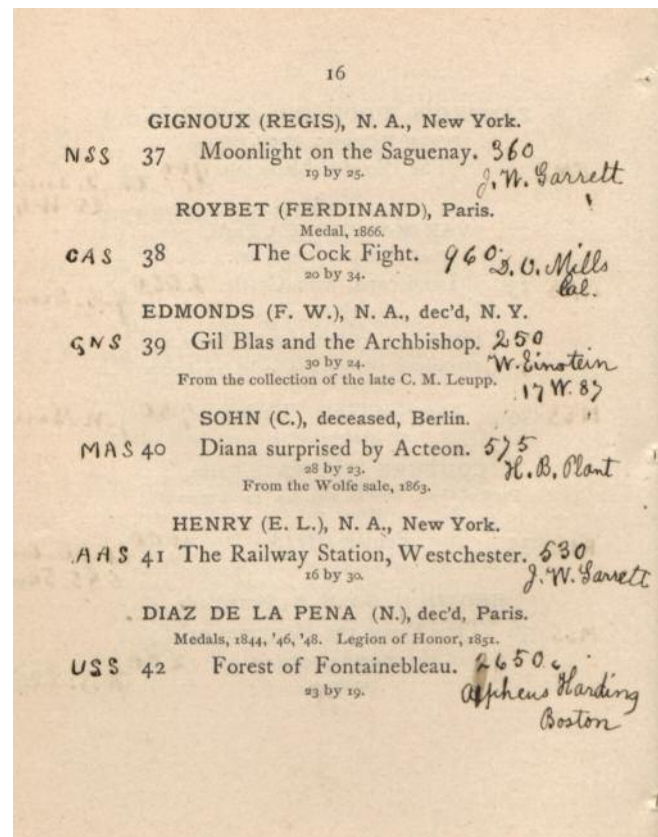
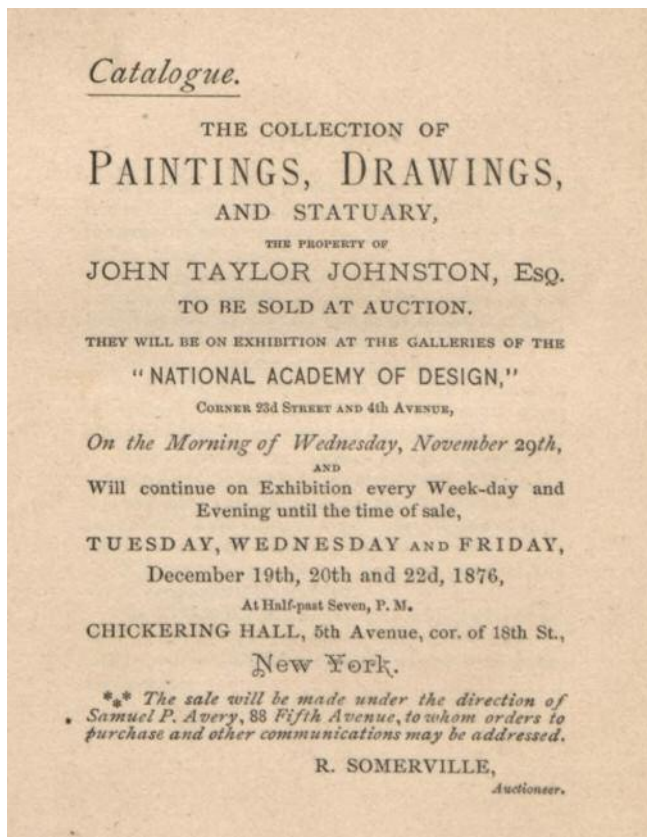
The pictures belong for the most part to the foreign schools, although there are many of them—and these among the best—the works of American artists...The exceptions are rare in which an artist...is represented by a work which does not show some of the qualities that have given him his name, and in the great majority of cases the pictures are as good examples of their painters as could be procured. This is even more the case with the American pictures.<sup>49</sup>

Other standouts from his collection included Thomas Cole's *The Voyage of Life* (all four paintings); Eastman Johnson, *The*

*Wandering Fiddler*; Jean Léon Gérôme, *Death of Caesar*; Francis W. Edmonds, *Gil Blas and the Archbishop*; Holman Hunt, *Isabella and the Pot of Basil*; Frederic Church, *Niagara Falls*; Sanford R. Gifford, *The Coming Storm*; John Frederick Kensett, *Afternoon on the Connecticut Shore*; William Stanley Haseltine, *Indian Rock, Narragansett*, and other notable works by prominent American and European artists.<sup>50</sup> Besides quality, the critics saw another more defined artistic aesthetic within the confines of the collection's broad spectrum of artists:

The general character of the collection is narrative, anecdote, and literary...These are, for the most part, common-sense pictures, easily understood, the work of men of much technical skill and honestly striving to show their skill, well aware that imagination nor fancy is their strong point, and well aware, also that the public for which they work is much more interested in the study of technical excellence, in imitation carried to the point of deception, in pathos stopping decently short of tragedy, and in the events of history or of domestic life, than it is in imagination or handling. This is not said, of course, to disparage the collection. It is said to define it.<sup>51</sup>

The inclusion of the Henry in the Johnston collection aligned with the prevailing discrimination of the patron in his choices—it was one of the finest examples of the artist's work



Auction catalogue for the collection of John Taylor Johnston, December 1876. E. L. Henry's *The Railway Station, Westchester* [The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation] is shown as lot 41, with the buyer noted as J. W. Garrett. Courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Watson Library.

that was both historical and anecdotal. This straightforward quality that defined the collection was also a characteristic of most all of Henry's genre paintings, particularly of *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*. The subject matter and the artist's enthusiasm for transportation are conveyed in how he presents the benefits railroads brought to nonurban communities—a view that Johnston surely found sympathetic.

The academy annual exhibitions were a venue that an active art collector such as Johnston would have regularly visited in order to see the latest work by contemporary artists of the day. The acceptance of Henry's painting for the annual would have given validation to the work as well as the positive review it earned. That Johnston would covet a version of that painting for his own art collection with a theme that was so closely allied with his own business interests would seem a natural consequence of his having seen the 1864 painting at the academy annual, and although while this circumstance is highly probable, it is not definitively known.

Acquiring a commissioned work such as this for his collection followed in the tradition of patronage by other industrialists, such as John Jay Phelps, who had commissioned an earlier railroad-themed painting by Inness, *The Lackawanna Valley*.<sup>52</sup> This representation differed from Henry's railroad canvases of only a few years later. Henry was exceptional among his artistic contemporaries for his freely celebratory representation of the railroad at a time when many artists and writers were seemingly not wholly convinced of the benefits offered by this new industrial innovation while showing how it impacted the unspoiled natural landscape.<sup>53</sup> In her memoir, Henry's widow recounted the circumstances of the painting commission:

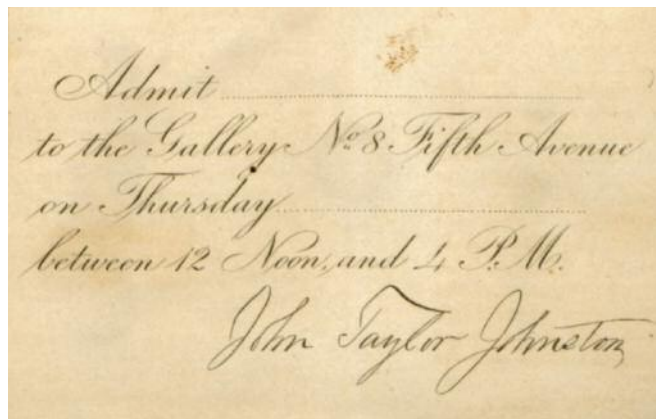
Mr. John Taylor Johnston, remembered as one of the collectors of American art, gave him [E. L. Henry] one of his first large orders, for one of the early R. R. paintings ...and paid him \$500, an almost unheard-of price at that time even by a man of reputation, not speaking of Church, Bierstadt, Gifford and a few others. It was placed on an easel at one of Mr. Johnston's noted artist receptions, attracting a good deal of attention, as also the young artist.<sup>54</sup>

Henry was known to work on order and periodically adapted works to the taste of patrons, even more so in later years.<sup>55</sup>

Ironically, financial reversals in the railroad industry forced Johnston to sell his entire art collection in 1876, at which time 323 works were offered for public auction.<sup>56</sup> The collection, and its sale, received much publicity, and it was lauded as the finest and most complete art collection in America at the time.<sup>57</sup> As noted in the catalogue by Samuel P. Avery, a prominent dealer of American art,

the Johnston Gallery has been for many years the most important private collection of art-works in the United States...The great sales of paintings previously held in New York appear small in comparison to that of Mr. Johnston.<sup>58</sup>

Johnston's collection had achieved special prominence due to



Top to bottom: *Manhattan: 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue-8<sup>th</sup> Street (West), [8 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue], c. 1920. Photographer unknown. Courtesy Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, The New York Public Library. New York Public Library Digital Collections. Invitation card for John Taylor Johnston's private art gallery, 8 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, New York c. 1875. The gallery building is seen directly behind the home, at 4 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Courtesy Internet Archive, archive.org.*

his effort to share the collection by opening a gallery in his own home, and later through the loan of his collection to the relatively new Metropolitan Museum of Art for an exhibition in the summer of 1876, prior to the bankruptcy and subsequent auction.

Johnston's commission was singled out from his preeminent art collection during its extended exhibition exposure in 1876. One critic noted that,

in 1876 when his picture named 'Railway Station—New England' [*The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*] was

exhibited, he [E. L. Henry] may be said to have reached his highest pinnacle of national fame.<sup>59</sup>

Johnston's works of art received additional attention through the preview exhibition held at the NAD that ran from November 29 through December 19, 1876, prior to the auction.<sup>60</sup>

The sale of Johnston's collection realized \$327,792, which was the largest amount ever realized to date for a single collection.<sup>61</sup> *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation* was coincidentally purchased by another railroad magnate, John Work Garrett, president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.<sup>62</sup>

While I had been familiar with the work of E. L. Henry, *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation* paintings first came to my attention many years ago when I first spied the Morse Museum painting in their art storage. At the time I was scouring the state for works of art to be included in an exhibition devoted to Florida private collections that I was organizing for the Orlando Museum of Art.<sup>63</sup> The accessibility and exceptional detail of the painting immediately struck my interest, as did the railroad subject matter. Years of private collecting on the part of Hugh F. McKean (1908-1995) and his wife Jeannette Genius McKean (1909-1989) formed the core collection that became The Morse Museum, named after her grandfather. I was intrigued that the painting had been long lost until the McKeans acquired it, and became additionally interested upon realizing there was a related painting in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Artists producing variant paintings of a theme has always been a source of fascination to me. The story became more absorbing with the added layer created when learning about the Johnston commission of the 1867 *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*, his only commission within a vast art collection of exceptional quality. And, another topic with which I have been engaged is in early private collections in America and how they were formed. With my discovery that it was actually the Morse Museum painting that had been the work exhibited in the 1864 National Academy exhibition, thereby

presenting a situation where Johnston, a voracious collector, could have seen the painting that would have sparked his imagination, a noteworthy element in the story and the navigation of the relationship between these two paintings that had previously been missing was finally supplied. These sorts of layered narratives that fill in the back story of a work of art bring it to life, as it happened for me. Storytelling was also an important part of the artist E. L. Henry and his career, with his scrupulously detailed genre scenes, as in *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation* paintings and his other scenes of early various forms of transportation that illustrate how these advancements transformed America and American life. These paintings will continue to reengage subsequent generations, as they resurrect a bygone era and bring it to life.

#### Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express gratitude and acknowledge the efforts of Warren Ashworth, Dr. Roberta Mayer, Dr. Melina Kervandjian, and Wendy Midgett for their invaluable editorial advice that shaped the final version of this article.



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#### Notes

1. See "Obituary, E. L. Henry," *American Art News* 17 (May 17, 1919): 4. Also see Clara Erskine Clement Waters and Laurence Hutton, *Artists of the Nineteenth Century and Their Work* (1885; New York: Arno Press, 1969), 346; and Samuel Isham, *History of American Painting* (1905; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), 346-47.
2. The painting was a 1937 bequest to The Metropolitan Museum of Art from the estate of Moses Tanenbaum after it passed through the hands of several owners. For a detailed account of the provenance, see Natalie Spassky, ed., *American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 2 (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), 561.
3. See Elizabeth McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry, N. A., 1841-1919* (Albany: New York State Museum, 1945); Jan Christman and Maureen Radl, *E. L. Henry's Country Life: An*

*Exhibition*, exh. cat. (New York: The Cragmoor Free Public Library, 1981); and Barbara Ball Buff, "Mr. Henry of Cragmoor," *Archives of American Art Journal* 21, no. 3 (1981): 2, for more on his training and biography.

4. Bartlett Cowdry, *National Academy of Design Exhibition Record, 1826-1860*, vol. 1 (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1943), 233; Maria Naylor, ed., *The National Academy of Design Exhibition Record 1861-1900*, vol. 1 (New York: Kennedy Galleries, 1973), 424-28; Peter Hastings, ed., *The Annual Exhibition Record of the National Academy of Design 1901-1950* (Madison, CT: Sound View Press, 1990), 257-78.
5. For more on Henry and Cragmoor, see Buff, "Mr. Henry of Cragmoor," and Christman and Radl, *E. L. Henry's Country Life*. It is not known when Henry first visited Cragmoor, but it was likely a sketching trip there in 1879 that cemented his interest since he returned the following year. He began building his summer home there in 1883. Also see McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward*



- Lamson Henry, 37 and 45.
6. Mary Socolof to the author, July 6, 2021. The house was designed by Henry and built by Joseph Mance. This information comes from the Cragmoor Historical Society. Also see McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*, 37–44.
  7. See McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*, 58, 84, 89, 92, and catalogue nos. 44, 58, 65, 146, 158, 257, and 329. McCausland compiled a list of known Henry works; these are the works with train themes she identifies. The list, however, is incomplete and contains errors. Henry produced at least eight paintings with train themes between 1864 and 1905, a number of which are among his most well-known works.
  8. Isham, *History of American Painting*, 346–47.
  9. For some of the modern scholarship in American genre painting and the place of Henry within that subject, see Amy Kurtz Lansing, *Historical Fictions: Edward Lamson Henry's Paintings of Past and Present*, exh. cat. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 2005); and H. Barbara Weinberg and Carrie Rebera Barratt, eds., *American Stories: Paintings of Everyday Life, 1765–1915*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2009); Patricia Hills, *The Painter's America: Rural and Urban Life, 1810–1910*, exh. cat. (New York: Praeger Publishers in association with the Whitney Museum, 1974), 1, 52–53. Also see Hermann Warner Williams, Jr., *Mirror to the American Past: A Survey of American Genre Painting: 1750–1900* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1973), 11, 206–9, 226, who cites Henry as a leading genre painter, and *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation* as his masterpiece, but then discredits him as a genre painter for not always rendering contemporary scenes.
  10. For more on the impact of the railroad in America, see George H. Douglas, *All Aboard!: The Railroad in American Life* (New York: Paragon House, 1972); Thomas M. Cooley, ed., *The American Railway: Its Construction, Development, Management, and Appliances* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, CGR Classics, 1889), and Robert Selph Henry, *Trains* (1934; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1943), among numerous other sources. For railroads and art, see Emery M. Seestedt, "Railroads in Art," *Railway and Locomotive Historical Society Bulletin* 118 (April 1968): 21–42, esp. 32 and 33.
  11. Henry D. Thoreau, *The Annotated Walden*, ed. Philip Van Doren Stern (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1970), 247. Thoreau first published *Walden* in 1854.
  12. Nathaniel Hawthorne, notebook entries from July 1844, as quoted in Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 11–13.
  13. Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*, 180.
  14. For more on rail depots, see Douglas, *All Aboard!*, 271.
  15. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854; New York: Walter J. Black, 1942), 141–42.
  16. Nikolai Cikovsky, Jr., "'The Ravages of the Axe': The Meaning of the Tree Stump in Nineteenth-Century American Art," *Art Bulletin* 61 (1979): 619.
  17. "Fine Arts," *Putnam's Monthly* 1 (June 1853): 702.
  18. Works of the period that slightly precede Henry and that typify the more conventional approach to representing trains within the landscape include Thomas Cole, *River in the Catskills* (1843; Karolik Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston); Asher B. Durand, *Progress (The Advance of Civilization)* (1853; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts); and several by George Inness, notably, *Delaware Water Gap*, (1861; The Metropolitan Museum of Art). For an overview of other railroad images produced during this period, see Barbara Novak, "Man's Traces: Axe, Train, Figure," in *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825–1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 157–80; Susan Danly and Leo Marx, eds., *The Railroad in American Art: Representations of Technological Change* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1988); and Cikovsky, "The Ravages of the Axe," 611–25.
  19. See Novak, *Nature and Culture*, 157–200, and Cikovsky, "The Ravages of the Axe," 611–25.
  20. See McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*, 58, 84, 89, 92, and cat. nos. 44, 58, 65, 146, 158, 257, and 329. He produced at least two more major train paintings that are omitted from this list.
  21. Kenneth W. Maddox, telephone conversation with the author, April 4, 1996. Maddox indicated that Henry's approach to painting the train was virtually unique in American fine art at the time. A survey of images from the period turned up only one painting, by Eugene Sintzenich (1792–1852) *Train Leaving Auburn Station at Rochester, New York*, c. 1850, oil on canvas, 15 x 20 inches, Rochester Historical Society, that depicts the locomotive and train in a similarly close-up view. However, in popular imagery, Currier & Ives produced a series of prints that include close-up views of locomotives. One such example is Frances Palmer's *The "Lightning Express" Trains*, 1863, color lithograph.
  22. Cooley, *The American Railway*, xxvii.
  23. For the most thorough account of Henry's work see McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*. Also see Lansing, *Historical Fictions*, whose study focuses on a sampling of his work. For other aspects of E. L. Henry's art and life, see Christman and Radl, *E. L. Henry's Country Life*; Buff, "Mr. Henry of Cragmoor," 2–7; and Nicole J. Williams, "A Kind of Traveling Gazette": Edward Lamson Henry's The Latest Village Scandal, Gossip, and History at the Dawn of Sensational Journalism, *Panorama* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2018), <https://editions.lib.umn.edu/panorama/article/traveling-gazette/>.
  24. E. D. H. Johnson, *Paintings of the British Social Scene from Hogarth to Sickert*, (New York: Rizzoli International, 1986), 203. For information on the railroad in Britain, see Charles Francis Adams, *Railroads: Their Origin and Problems* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1886).
  25. Frith's three most well-known genre panoramas were *Life at the Seaside (Ramsgate Sands)* (1854; Royal Collection); *Derby Day*, (1858, Tate Gallery); and *The Railway Station*, (1862; Royal Holloway, University of London). For more on Frith's painting, *The Railway Station*, see Christopher Wood, *Victorian Panorama: Paintings of Victorian Life* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 207–15; Aubrey Noakes, *William Frith: Extraordinary Victorian Painter: A Biographical and Critical Essay* (London: Jupiter Press, 1978), 71–75; E. D. H. Johnson, *Paintings of the British Social Scene*, 195, 202–3; and <https://www.rct.uk/collection/405292/the-railway-station>.
  26. Noakes, *William Frith*, 73–74.
  27. For information on the print of *The Railway Station*, see Allen Staley et al., *The Post-Pre-Raphaelite Print*, exh. cat. (New York: Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, 1995), 19–21. The print of *The Railway Station* was distributed in America.
  28. Lucia Fairchild Fuller, "The Field of Art: E. L. Henry, N.A.: An Appreciation," *Scribner's Magazine* 68 (August 1920): 254, and "E. L. Henry, Obituary," *American Art News* 17 (May 17, 1919): 4.
  29. Charles Lawesson, letter to the author, April 7, 1996. Also see Henry, *Trains*, for how trains changed the face of American life.
  30. For detailed information on early locomotives and fuel, see John H. White, *A History of the American Locomotive* (1968; Dover Publications, 1979), 83–84, 422–24. The locomotive Henry rendered is likely a Rogers 4-4-0 steam locomotive, manufactured in Paterson, New Jersey. Rogers was one of the largest locomotive producers of the time. My appreciation is extended to Charles Lawesson for his help in identifying the locomotive.
  31. For extensive information on rural railroad depots, see H. Roger Grant and Charles W. Bohi, *The Country Railroad Station in America* (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing, 1978), 26–28. The two-story stations, particular to the Northeast, frequently included a living space for agents on the second floor. Unfortunately, the specific station no longer appears to be extant or is an amalgam of sources. An extensive search for it has not yet revealed any specific identification.
  32. E. L. Henry to Edward V. Valentine, September 21, 1870, as quoted in Lansing, *Historical Fictions*, 41, n3. Also see McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*, 319, which inaccurately states

- that Henry was too young to enlist; however, enlistment age was eighteen, and he was twenty-three years old at the time.
33. The Metropolitan Museum painting was listed at the sale of John Taylor Johnston's collection as *The Railway Station, Westchester*. See Samuel P. Avery, *The Collection of Paintings, Drawings, and Statuary, the Property of John Taylor Johnston*, sale catalogue (New York: Samuel P. Avery, December 19, 20, and 22, 1876), 16, cat. no. 41; and Spassky, *American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 2, 559-60, and note 37 for more on the various titles of this and the 1864 painting.
  34. For more on Henry and his African American subjects, see McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*, 91. Written in a different age, McCausland does discuss this theme, but in outmoded terms. All enslaved people in New York State were freed by 1827.
  35. Henry's exhibition record at the National Academy reflects the various dates as he used the studio as his contact address. The address of the Tenth Street Studio Building was 15 Tenth Street, but the number was subsequently changed to 51 in 1866. See Annette Blaugrund, *The Tenth Street Studio Building: Artist-Entrepreneurs from the Hudson River School to the American Impressionists*, exh. cat. (New York: Parrish Art Museum, 1997), esp. 131, 133. There is also a chance the Johnston saw Henry's 1864 painting in his studio there, but it seems far more likely that he saw it while it was exhibited in the National Academy annual.
  36. McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*, 154. McCausland indicates that a photograph of *The Station on the Morris and Essex Railroad* is in the Henry Album from the collection of the New York State Museum, Albany, and is inscribed as *Old Station at South Orange, New Jersey*, 1864.
  37. The Morse Museum oil on panel measures 10 x 18 inches, and is inscribed on the verso in the artist's hand: April 1864. Its whereabouts were unknown although it had been hanging in the New York City living room of a couple for nearly half a century until it was consigned to the Christie's American painting sale of December 2, 1988, lot 26. David Donaldson, former curator, Morse Museum of American Art, conversation with the author, April 9, 1996. The titles, however, of both versions of *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation* prove to be problematic and neither title is original to either painting. There is also no reference to either painting within the artist's surviving correspondence. The 1864 painting was exhibited at the 1864 National Academy annual exhibition as *The Railway Depot*, which is the only early recording of this work. The Metropolitan Museum painting was first listed at the sale of John Taylor Johnston's collection as *The Railway Station, Westchester*. See Avery, *The Collection of Paintings, Drawings, and Statuary, the Property of John Taylor Johnston*, cat. no. 41, 16. McCausland further complicates the matter with an entry of an 1866 work titled *An American Railroad Station*, from 1866, and suggests that it was in the collection of Johnston; it is, however, almost assuredly the same painting (see McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*, 157, cat. no. 58). The painting has also been recorded with various titles, but the painting now most often bears the title *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*, as it did after it came to Garrett after the auction of the Johnston collection in 1876. See *Catalogue of Modern Paintings by Artists of the American and Foreign Schools* (New York: American Art Association, February 15, 17, 1919), cat. no. 57, n.p. Then, in 1934, the painting mysteriously became associated with Stratford, Connecticut, in notes from The Metropolitan Museum curatorial files, yet, in the will of Moses Tanenbaum, the work was simply titled *The 9:45 Accommodation*. It appears in print with the Stratford association in "The Moses Tanenbaum Bequest," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 34 (June 1939): 137-78. The title of the 1864 painting in the Morse Museum was later changed to mirror The Metropolitan Museum painting, but was not later retitled even though The Metropolitan Museum dropped the Stratford association from its title when it found that there was no foundation for that identification. For notes and correspondence on The Metropolitan Museum painting, see the curatorial file for the work in the Department of American Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. For a history of the different title changes see the catalogue entry in Spassky, *American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 2, 559-60. The evidence suggests that the original title was *The Railway Station, Westchester*, since the work was published that way during Johnston's lifetime and since he had commissioned the work. Four rail lines were known to run through Westchester at that time, and the somewhat uniform styles of railroad depot construction at that time also contribute to the difficulty in assigning a particular locale despite extensive research of both Connecticut and New York rail depots. The subject may also possibly be a composite image and not reference any one site, as perhaps suggested by the composition as sketched in the drawing. My appreciation is extended to both Kenneth Maddox of the Newington-Cropsey Foundation, and Laura Vookles of the Hudson River Museum for sharing their extensive knowledge of New York railroads and their opinions about the locale depicted in the paintings.
  38. "National Academy of Design: Second Article" *New York Evening Post*, May 28, 1864, 1. The 1864 National Academy of Design annual ran from April 15 through June 25.
  39. For more on various types of genre painting, both American and French, see Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Redefining Genre: French and American Painting 1850-1900*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: The Trust for Museum Exhibitions, 1995).
  40. As reported by Henry's wife, Frances L. Henry and quoted in McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*, 327.
  41. Henry Archive, Collection of the New York State Museum, Albany, acquisition. #42.17.7. A photocopy is in the curatorial file for *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation*, Department of American Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
  42. See *Harper's Weekly* 39, no. 697 (August 15, 1868): 521, <https://archive.org/details/harpersweeklyv12bonn/page/n517/mode/2up?q=August+>
  43. As quoted in McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*, 312.
  44. Will H. Low, "Edward L. Henry," *New York Evening Post*, May 12, 1919, 10.
  45. McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*, 345.
  46. For more on Johnston as a collector and founder of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, see "William Tilden Blodgett and the Beginnings of The Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* 1, no. 3 (February 1906): 39-40; and Thomas Busciglio-Ritter, "Covetable Pictures: John Taylor Johnston (1820-1893), Collecting Art between New York and Europe," *Journal of the History of Collections*, 32, no. 1 (2020): 73-89.
  47. John Ott, *Manufacturing the Modern Patron in Victorian California: Cultural Philanthropy, Industrial Capital, and Social Authority* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 70-71. Also see Busciglio-Ritter, "Covetable Pictures," 73-89; and Valerie Ann Leeds, "Antecedents to the Museum: The Private Collection as Public Resource in Nineteenth-Century New York, Three Case Studies," (Luman Reed, Thomas Jefferson Bryan, and John Taylor Johnston), unpublished manuscript, collection of the author.
  48. For general biographical information on Johnston, see the *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. 5 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), 143-44. For a description of the collection see "Sale of a Famous Gallery," *New York Times*, November 26, 1876, 6.
  49. "The Johnston Collection: The Best Pictures," *New-York Daily Tribune*, November 25, 1876, 2.
  50. Among the other artists represented in the collection were: Washington Allston, William Bouguereau, John George Brown, John William Casilear, Samuel Colman, Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, Thomas Couture, Charles François Daubigny, Eugene Delacroix, Paul Delaroché, Asher B. Durand, Seymour Guy, James and William Hart, Henry Inman, George Lambdin, Jervis McEntee, Joshua Reynolds,

- William Trost Richards, Gilbert Stuart, Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait, Louis Comfort Tiffany, John Trumbull, Benjamin West, Richard Caton Woodville. See Busciglio-Ritter, "Covetable Pictures," 73-89.
51. "The Johnston Collection: Some of the Best Pictures," *New-York Daily Tribune*, November 29, 1876, 2.
  52. Busciglio-Ritter, "Covetable Pictures," 73-89.
  53. See Busciglio-Ritter, "Covetable Pictures," 81.
  54. As quoted in McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*, 318.
  55. McCausland, *The Life and Work of Edward Lamson Henry*, 58-59.
  56. For more information on the bankruptcy of New Jersey Central Railroad and Johnston's resignation see "The Coal Roads and Coal Lands," *New-York Daily Tribune*, September 8, 1876, 4, and "New-Jersey Central: John Taylor Johnston Resigns," *New-York Daily Tribune*, October 6, 1876, 5. For the works sold by Johnston, see Avery, *The Collection of Paintings, Drawings, and Statuary, the Property of John Taylor Johnston*.
  57. For some of the publicity and comments, see "Fate of a Famous Collection: The Johnston Collection to be Sold," *New-York Daily Tribune*, November 24, 1876, 2; "The Johnston Collection: The Best Pictures," *New-York Daily Tribune*, November 25, 1876, 2; "Sale of a Famous Gallery: Mr. John Taylor Johnston's Remarkable Collection of Painting to be Sold," *New York Times*, November 26, 1876; and "The Johnston Collection: Some of the Best Pictures," *New-York Daily Tribune*, November 29, 1876, 2.
  58. Avery, *The Collection of Paintings, Drawings, and Statuary, the Property of John Taylor Johnston*, "Notes," n.p.
  59. Fuller, "The Field of Art," 252.
  60. Avery, *The Collection of Paintings, Drawings, and Statuary, the Property of John Taylor Johnston*, "Notes," n.p.
  61. Avery, *The Collection of Paintings, Drawings, and Statuary, the Property of John Taylor Johnston*, "Notes," n.p.
  62. Avery, *The Collection of Paintings, Drawings, and Statuary, the Property of John Taylor Johnston*, "Notes," n.p.; and Waters and Hutton, *Artists of the Nineteenth Century*, 346. *The 9:45 a.m. Accommodation* was lot number 41 in the Johnston sale. The painting sold for \$530 in the auction.
  63. See Valerie Ann Leeds, *Hidden Treasures: American Paintings in Florida Private Collections*, exh. cat. (Orlando: Orlando Museum of Art, 1992), cat. no. 26, 7, 27, illus.



Playing cards, c. 1890. Photographer unknown.

# Victorian Pastimes

## PUZZLES AND GAMES

*Renee Evans and Jaclyn Spainhour Tubbs*

In March of 2020, the world as we knew it was turned upside down. The first wave of the coronavirus ushered in a time of panic, fear, and isolation which forced individuals to reflect on their priorities. Questions began to darken their homebound evenings:

How will we survive this isolation?

How long will this last?

Will the world ever be the same?

Lockdown brought with it creative outlets for dealing with the isolation and loneliness of the pandemic. Unable to spend time with family and friends, experience the world through travel or dining, or celebrate milestones publicly like births and weddings, humanity collectively brushed themselves off and began to explore ways to cope with lockdown. Television, the virtual world, and book clubs had their appeal. But people struggling with screen overload and boredom began taking solace in board games and puzzles. They turned to them for amusement, much like their ancestors did so often. Our current coronavirus saw a jig-saw puzzle craze the roots of which go back to the Victorian Era.

At the Hunter House Victorian Museum, an 1894 Richardsonian Romanesque historic house museum in Norfolk, Virginia, the staff knew that if there was ever a time to bring out the Hunter family's extensive puzzle, board game, and card game collections, it was when they reopened after the height of the pandemic in April of 2021. The games, puzzles, and other items reflected in the images are part of the Hunter family's personal collection dating from the mid-nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century.

### Puzzle crazes

The first puzzle craze lasted from 1907 until 1911. A May 1908 *New York Times* headline illustrates this concept, stating:

New Puzzle Menaces the City's Sanity. Young and old, rich and poor, all hard at work fitting cut-up pictures together. Solitaire is forgotten. Two clergymen, a supreme court justice, and a noted financier among the latest converts to the craze.

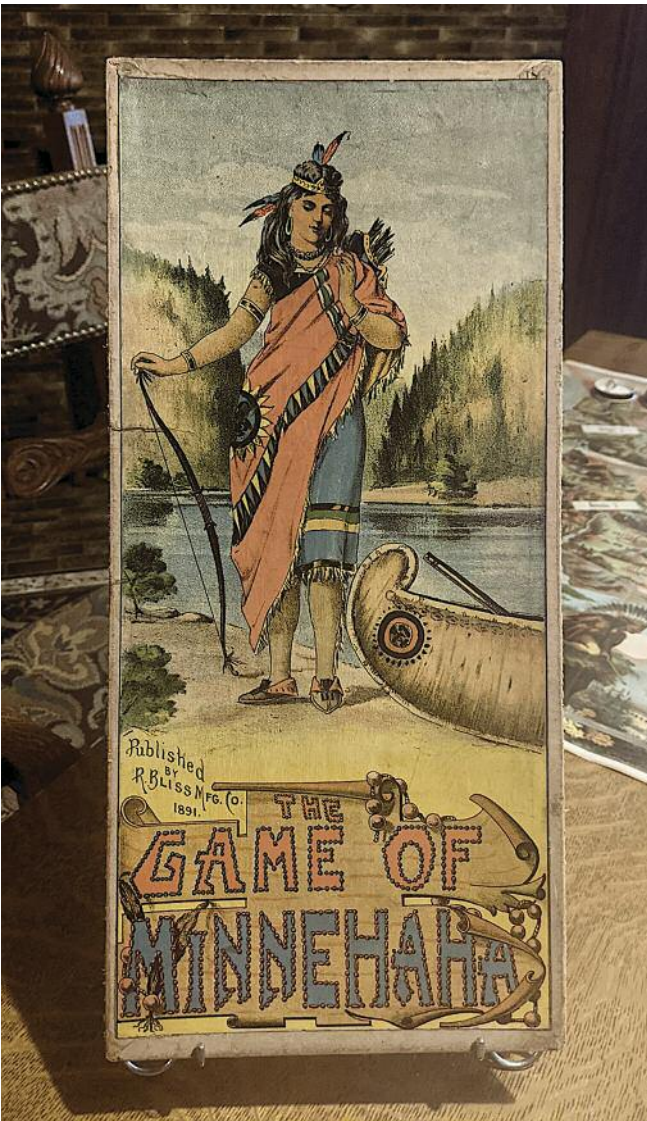
These early puzzles were cut from wood and were relatively expensive. In 1908, Parker Brothers added to the craze by creating interlocking figure pieces that fit together instead of



Top to bottom: Pre-1908 interlocking feature puzzle made from wood; puzzle made from cardboard, c. 1932. Hunter Family Collection. Courtesy Hunter House Victorian Museum.

laying side-by-side. The change was so well-received, the company began solely producing these interlocking puzzles. This new invention boosted the jig-saw puzzle craze, resulting in the creation of puzzle lending libraries, puzzle clubs, and puzzle exchanges.

The second jig-saw puzzle craze occurred during the Great Depression between 1932 and 1933. Companies were able to cut production costs by swapping hand-cut wood for cardboard, thereby causing the price of the puzzle to drop significantly. For the first time, puzzles were affordable and



Above and left: *The Game of Minnehaha*. Based on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), the goal is to leave the Native American village, travel through falls, rivers, mountains, and canyons before being the first to return to the village. Played by throwing counters down and interpreting the number to move based on the instructions. R. Bliss Manufacturing Company, 1891. Courtesy Hunter House Victorian Museum.

available to almost everyone, with a 300-piece puzzle costing twenty-five cents to purchase in the 1930s.

By 1932, weekly puzzles appeared on newsstands for the masses. Themes were general and appealed to all, including historical images, paintings, seascapes, and more. At the height of the craze, the puzzle industry was producing over 10 million puzzles weekly. The craze slowed, as such fads do, in 1933.

The coronavirus pandemic of 2020 ushered in the third jig-saw puzzle craze. While board games remained readily available during this period, jig-saw puzzles became scarce. The puzzle sections in stores were depleted, online retailers reported no stock, and even the manufacturers had difficulty keeping up with demand.

### The Rise of Board Games

In addition to jig-saw puzzles, the public has taken to competing in card and board games for entertainment during this period. The origin of many board games occurred (in) within the past two centuries. Victorians most notably witnessed the rise in popularity of many of these board games. With the distinction now between home and workplace in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, and the huge rise of servants employed in middle and upper-middle class homes, leisure time became common in many households. Adults began using games as a way to encourage spending quality time amongst



*The Game of Happy Days in Old New England*. A race game based on the four seasons in New England, the game can include up to 6 players. The object is to get to the end of the board first and is played by using pre-printed instructions. Milton Bradley Co., Springfield, Massachusetts, 1889. Courtesy Hunter House Victorian Museum.

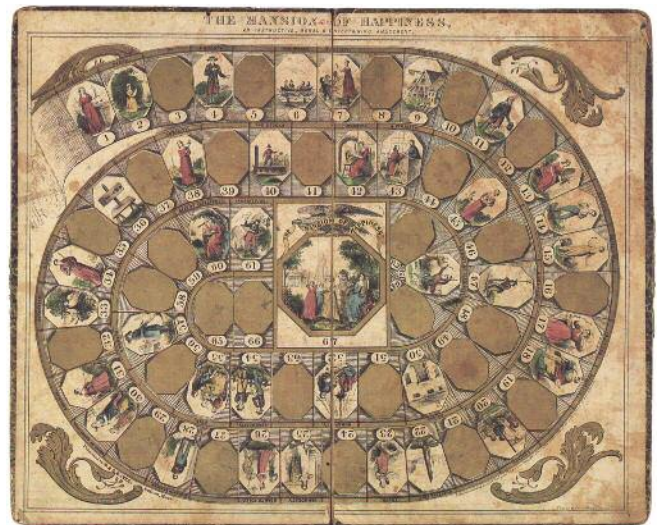
their social circles, as well as between parents with their children. Early games were mostly card games or conversation card games but the 1870s witnessed the rise in popularity of board games among adults. Board games played around a table encouraged open dialogue and play for all involved. Puzzles and games, in their own way, became the great equalizer among players of all ages. The communication stimulated by games lead to a sense of community and solidified the home as a place for instruction, guidance and comfort. This Victorian trend continued throughout the next century and can be felt today.

During the first winter of the Civil War, *The Checkered Game of Life* sold 40,000 copies, an unheard-of amount during that time. Other manufactured board games also witnessed unusually high sales. The increase of sales during a time of war and heartache illustrates the popularity of board games as a method of comfort.

### The Golden Age of Board Games

The golden age of board games, commencing in the 1840s, featured four main giants: the McLoughlin Brothers, Milton Bradley, W. & S. B. Ives, and George Parker. Versions of the games popularized by these giants continue to exist today.

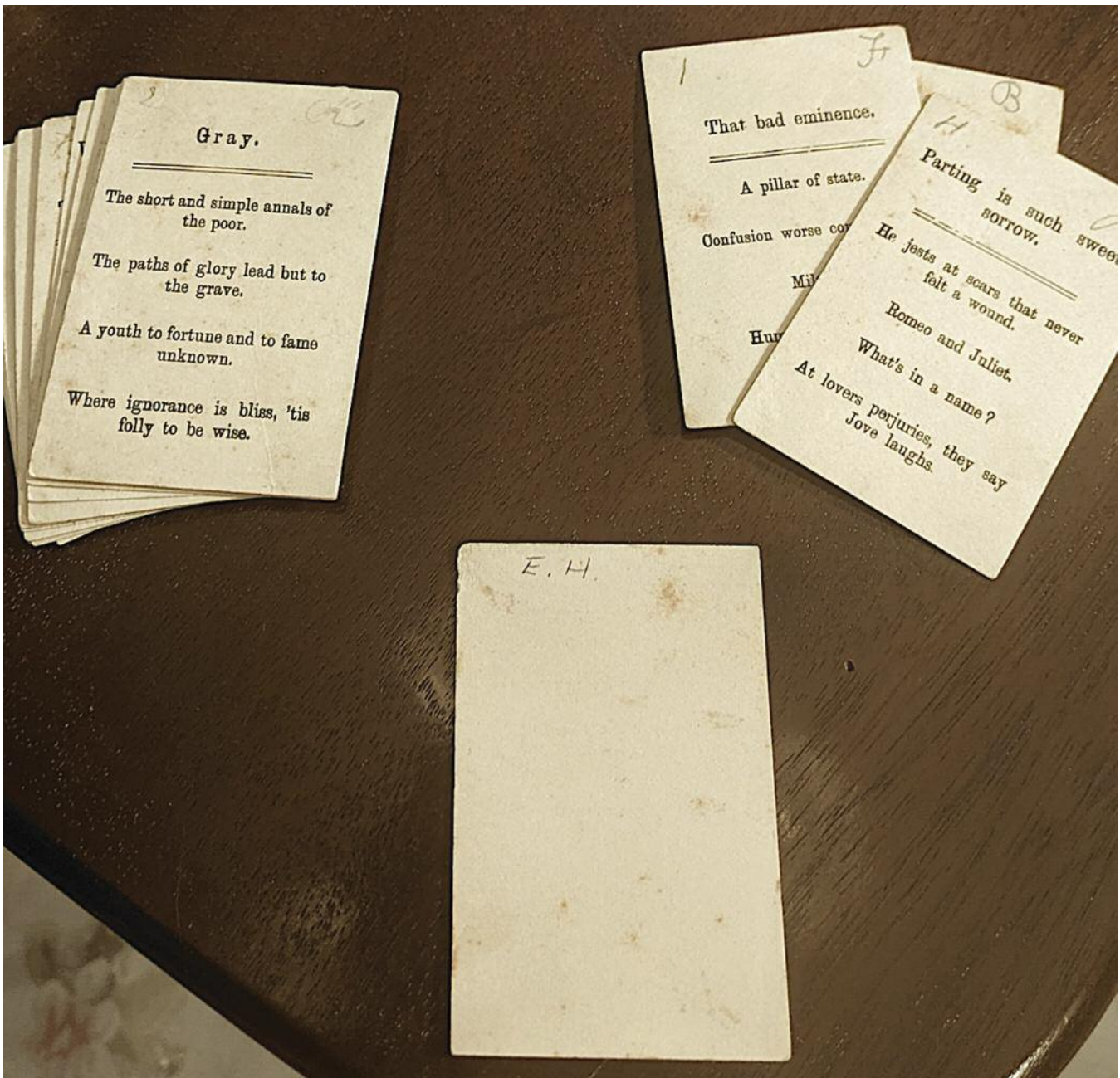
Women were often the actual creators behind many of the popular games of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many of Ives' games were actually created by a woman named Anne Abbot. Though Charles Darrow sold *Monopoly* to Parker Brothers, claiming it as his own, it was later discovered the game was based on *The Landlord's Game* created by Elizabeth



*The Mansion of Happiness*, 1843. W. & S. B. Ives, Salem, Massachusetts.

Magie in 1904 as a way to highlight the principles of the single tax concept created by economist Henry George.

The earliest discovered games printed in the U. S. were printed in 1822 by New York bookseller F & R Lockwood. The two earliest games produced by Lockwood were travel-themed games depicting the U. S. and Europe. In 1843, W. & S. B. Ives published *The Mansion of Happiness*, a game meant to teach children morality and the consequences of vice. Though this game was printed in the U. S., it is actually a copy of a game



*The New Game of Familiar Quotations.* Meant to encourage conversation, each card would have a list of either five quotes or titles. The goal was to ask players for cards related to one person or author until you had a complete set of five quotations or titles from a single author. Eloise Hunter's initials are visible (E. H.) on the reverse of the cards. McLoughlin Brothers, 1887. Courtesy Hunter House Victorian Museum.

produced in London in 1800. Ives eventually produced many games meant to teach morals to children. While other publishers followed suit, none were more successful than the McLoughlin Brothers, who came to the forefront of the industry in the 1870s.

John McLoughlin learned printing and wood engraving from his father and his business partner at Elton & Co, active between 1840 and 1851 in New York City. After that, John took over the company and he added the publishing of children's card games and brought his brother Edmond to the company.

McLoughlin's games were different from their competitors because they all were hand-colored and came in small, sturdy boxes with colorful, artist-created lithographed sheets as decoration. His card games were more likely to catch the buyer's eye as a result of their decoration, which resulted in increased sales and the need for mass-production of these color images by an assembly line of artists. He became the first person to employ this method of production for producing games. Up until 1900, McLoughlin Brothers continued to produce many lavishly illustrated games for broad distribution.





*Halma*, by George Howard Monks, c.1883. A strategy game made to be played on a 16" x 16" grid board, the game board changed shape over time and became what we know today as Chinese Checkers. Hunter Family Collection. Courtesy Hunter House Victorian Museum.

While the McLoughlin Brothers were the first to start manufacturing games, it was another man who first made the American game business a true industry. This man was Milton Bradley, a lithographer in Springfield, Massachusetts, who created his first game in 1860. *The Checkered Game of Life*, a game meant to teach success through integrity, can still be found in a modernized version in homes today as the *Game of Life*. After the start of the Civil War, Bradley made changes to his printing process to create small versions of the game designed to fit in the knapsacks of the soldiers as "travel games" during the conflict. Bradley branched out into toys as well as games during this time. He commercially introduced croquet in the United States in 1866 and is associated with bringing the zoetrope to America. Bradley eventually bought out the McLoughlin Brothers in 1920 after the death of John McLoughlin. Popular classic games from the company are *The Game of Life*, *Candy Land*, *Operation*, *Yahtzee*, *Battleship*, and *Twister*.

George Parker emerged in the landscape of the American game industry in 1883. While the other two major companies were mostly focused on eye-catching details and children's games, Parker aimed his games at the adult market. He



*The Checkered Game of Life*, c. 1860. Milton Bradley, Springfield, Massachusetts.

believed games should be played for enjoyment instead of moral or educational purposes, which led him to target adults



Above: *Phisto*, manufactured by Wesley W. Hosier, Norfolk, Virginia, date unknown. Hunter Family Collection. Courtesy Hunter House Victorian Museum. Left: *Round the World with Nellie Bly*, a Novel and Fascinating Game with Plenty of Excitement on Land and Sea, manufactured by McLoughlin Brothers, c. 1890. Courtesy of the University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa.

rather than children. He invented his first game while in high school and eventually purchased games from other inventors to build his portfolio. He eventually brought his brothers into his organization and created the name we recognize today. Parker Brothers fashioned war games for adults to play around a table, tabletop badminton for parlor nights, and even Ping-Pong. The company branched out into jigsaw puzzles before circling back to game creation with the purchase of *Monopoly* in 1934. Popular classic games from the company are *Monopoly*, *Risk*, *Sorry*, *Clue*, *Rook*, and *Boggle*.

#### Games Local and Abroad

By the middle of the nineteenth century, industrialization was fully underway in America. Cross-country railways were expanding, the telegraph became a new form of communication, and advancements were made in steamship travel. The majority of the games produced in the middle of the century reflected all of these changes. Some of the popular games were *The Railroad Game*, *The Conquest of Nations*, *Voyage of Discovery*, *Trip to Paris*, and *Peter Coddle's Trip to New York*. With travel becoming more widely available to all classes, many games became centered on locations rather than educational topics. Some games were about specific American locations, such as popular cities and states. New York, New England, California, and even Alaska were all popular subjects. Capitalizing

on this trend, booksellers themselves started to create games based on their own cities to sell in their shops.

At the end of the nineteenth century, journalist, inventor, and explorer Nellie Bly's trip around the world, a pivotal event of the period, became its own game. Games reflecting the American dream of rising to a higher social class through industry and luck, like a game centering on the Klondike Gold Rush, also became popular. Moving into the twentieth century, the trend of creating games based on current affairs and popular culture continued. As radio and television emerged, game topics became based on shows and, eventually, motion pictures.

## Conclusion

As this article is being written for publication, the authors recognize that we are not 'out of the woods' with the coronavirus pandemic just yet. Still, the exhibit which inspired this article, entitled *Victorian Pastimes: Games of Yesteryear*, offers a rare glimpse into the world of at-home leisure. The Hunter family's extensive collection includes hand-painted boards, which are works of art in themselves, and puzzles so frustrating to put together they might make any present-day user apoplectic. This is because the majority of the puzzles came in boxes without pictures and with pieces that do not interlock.

The Hunter's collection traces the shift from moral instruction to pure entertainment as motives for their games. They owned a variety of racing-style games, wherein players try to beat each other to a finish line. They also owned many

traditional games for two to four players that we still play today, such as Chinese Checkers. This collection tells the story of one family who lived their lives together from the late nineteenth century until the last child died in the 1960s. Every card, every teetotum, every board is marked by one of the Hunter children.



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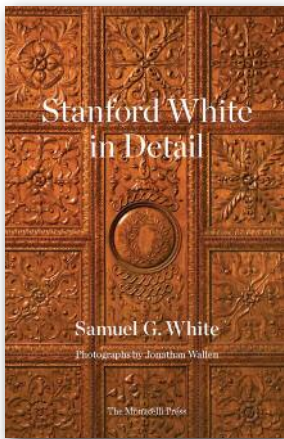
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# The Bibliophile

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## *Stanford White in Detail*

Samuel G. White, photographs by Jonathan Wallen.  
The Monacelli Press, 2020.

So much has been said about Stanford White that it is startling to come upon this book, which gives a fresh look at the work of this master architect. A handsome volume of striking photographs of

interiors and architectural ornament, it is the work of Samuel G. White, the great-grandson of its subject and an architect in his own right. With his architectural practice on hold because of the great COVID-19 lockdown, Samuel White devoted himself to a book that would examine his ancestor's "obsession with ornament and texture." It is unusual in consisting almost entirely of photographs, taken by Jonathan Wallen, and most of these are extreme close-ups of architectural details. It is that rare literary object: a nearly wordless book that still manages to convey a great deal.

When an architect is as well-known as White, it is a feat to make his work fresh and unfamiliar. Wallen's photographs are superbly composed and lighted and splendidly reproduced. Most remarkable is their sense of tactility. There are exquisitely detailed doorknobs that beg to be clasped; a door studded with brass carpet tacks that function as sequins; a wall of split bamboo, so delicately lashed together it that seems to rattle gently before your eyes. But these photographs do something more. McKim, Mead & White were so productive that monographs can illustrate only a smattering of their most important buildings, typically represented by distant views that show the building as a whole. This tends to exaggerate the stylistic disruptions, as the firm seemed to lunge from Queen Anne to Romanesque Revival to creative eclecticism to classical revival. But by focusing almost exclusively on doors, hardware, hinges, stair newels, and the like, this book downplays the specifics of each historical style and lets us see how White treated surfaces, edges, and junctions. Seen in this way, White's work shows a breathtaking continuity. Even his classical details show the same absolute control over texture. I know of no other photographs that so vividly convey his distinctive touch.

The most stunning photograph in the book is the sybaritic interior of the Veterans Room in New York's Seventh Regiment Armory (1880), a space that rivals James Abbott McNeill Whistler's famed Peacock Room in its sheer unbuttoned

extravagance. At first glance, the profusion of inventive detail—the iron straps that cradle the ceiling beams, the columns wrapped in iron chains—gives the impression of High Victorian excess. There is the same saturation of detail and color, the same love of contrasting materials, the same straining for overwhelming impact. Yet a second glance shows how much White's aesthetic goals differed from those of his High Victorian contemporaries. At the very outset of his career, his artistic personality was already fully formed and confident, which is surely the most important revelation of this book.

White came of age at a time when the doctrine of truth was almost universally accepted as architecture's greatest commandment—truth in the use of materials, truth in the display of construction, truth in the descriptive arrangement of parts. At the zenith of the High Victorian movement, in the 1860s and 1870s, it was not enough simply to design truthfully, one also had to exaggerate expressively the facts of structure. Columns should appear to strain, muscular brackets should visibly stretch and distend under the load they carried, although it was not always clear if they were enjoying their labor or suffering in torment. But for White, the elegant repose of a building was its principal fact, and he typically suppressed any sense that his architectural elements were actually performing any labor. Where brackets and beams appear, they serve not as visible structure but as playful garnishes. Where possible, he overlaid his walls with graceful lattices and screens, masking their load-bearing role. This is not to say that his walls are inert, merely that their vitality derives not from any tectonic display but rather from the shimmer and oscillation of discrete colors and textures, artfully juxtaposed.

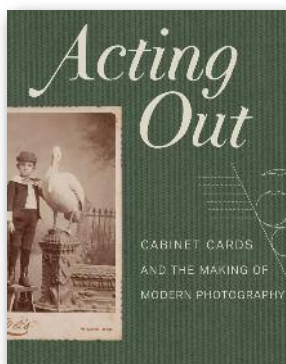
With its emphasis on exquisite ornament, *Stanford White in Detail* places its subject in the heart of the Aesthetic Movement, which recoiled violently against the idea that art was fundamentally a moral enterprise, one seeking to reveal truth. White's aesthetic goals were closest to painters like Whistler and Thomas Dewing, whose paintings did not aspire to tell a story but to impart a mood, and usually one of languor or reverie. Where they used muted gauzy fields of color, creating an overall tonal unity, White used fields of carefully adjusted texture, which appeared embroidered and stitched or woven, suggesting textile rather than building. (Dewing was a close friend, and White's elegant frames for his paintings in the Freer Gallery show how closely their aesthetic goals coincided.)

That White was an abundantly gifted architect is beyond doubt. Buildings like his Lovely Lane Church in Baltimore or New York's Washington Memorial Arch show the hand of a master. But *Stanford White in Detail* reminds us that White remained to the end a graphic artist, for whom a building was nothing more than an assembly of surfaces, waiting to be gorgeously painted. If his works reproduce so happily on the page here it is because they have resumed their original form, as exquisite graphic art, and the most beautiful architectural surfaces that America has created.

(This is an edited version of an article that appeared in *The New Criterion*, in December 2020.)

Reviewed by Michael J. Lewis

**Michael J. Lewis** has taught since 1993 at Williams College, where he is Faison-Pierson-Stoddard Professor of Art. After receiving his B.A. from Haverford College, and two years at the University of Hannover Germany, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1989. His books include *Frank Furness: Architecture and the Violent Mind* (2001), the prize-winning *August Reichensperger: The Politics of the German Gothic Revival* (1993), and *Philadelphia Builds* (2020). He is the architecture critic for the *Wall Street Journal*.



## *Acting Out: Cabinet Cards and the Making of Modern Photography*

John Rohrback, Editor.

Contributions by Erin Pauwels, Britt Salvesen and Fernanda Valverde.

Amon Carter Museum of American Art and University of California Press, 2020.

This delightful book is the catalog of an exhibition devoted to cabinet cards: those photographs mounted on sturdy 6½ x 4¼ inch cardboard that are now ubiquitous on eBay. They once populated knick-knack shelves, mantelpieces, velvet-covered albums, and yes – cabinets. From shortly after the Civil War until the rise of the Brownie camera at the turn of the century, cabinet cards dominated the market for portrait photography. Technological innovations and untiring entrepreneurship gave most towns of any size a photography studio, and smaller places were serviced by photographers with studios on horse-carts or even train-cars. Sometimes startlingly original images came about through an alchemy between sitter and photographer. The catalog presents hundreds of such images, many from the collection of Robert E. Jackson, who did indeed buy them on eBay. Posing for a photograph was a way of acting out identity for these middle-class Victorian Americans, a very modern endeavor.

The exhibition *Acting Out* was shown in only two venues from the Summer of 2020 to the Spring of 2021, making it a victim of COVID-19. Luckily, the exhibition can be recreated by perusing the three sections of plates in the catalog, most reproduced at full size. For me, each section was more interesting than the last. In the first section, actors and other celebrities present themselves to the camera as the compelling public personalities that they were, from Joe Jefferson as Rip van Winkle, to a self-referential self-portrait of Napoleon Sarony, the photographer who made so many of these images

and made both the people and their images famous. In the next section, “The Trade,” the tricks and the trade secrets of the commercial cabinet card photography business are revealed. Photographers created brand names by having their signatures, like artists, embossed on the front of their stock cardboard mounts. A lively trade press and prop-manufacturing industry supplied all sorts of technical devices and instructions for special effects. A sitter could be shown silhouetted in an oak leaf, or trudging through a snowstorm, or floating in clouds, or resting on a palatial terrace. On the backs of the cards photographers listed their addresses and their services; Ryder of Cleveland was apparently distinguished enough to include only those two words artfully deployed amid Japonese and Neo-Gothic motifs, while a simple inscription identified Dr. A Lane in Pike, NY as both photographer and dentist. The third section, “Sharing Life – Family and Friends,” demonstrates the premise of the book – for a small audience of intimates, photographer and sitter reveled in the act of posing, creating images rife with humor, innuendo, candor, and dignity. There is a series of people at work: a soldier; a postman; two salesmen with heaps of shoes; a boy in baker's toque plying bread. There are many very odd images: one man hamming it up as he saws the head off his grinning friend; two Stetson-wearing long-haired girls smoking blunts, playing cards and drinking whiskey; the over-sized face of a woman peering out of the hood of a pygmy fur coat, posed in front of painted icebergs; a boy with his pet pelican (this image is on the cover of the book). I am so glad to have met these people through their gloriously weird portraits.

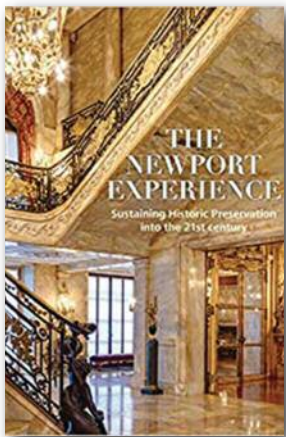
The essays in the book delve into the production, marketing

and reception of cabinet cards. Erin Pauwels' essay makes the point that the obvious artificiality of these staged photos was deliberate. It was not that sitters, photographers – and viewers of the images – “mistook these scenes for real life, but they were willing to suspend disbelief in order to appreciate the clever craftsmanship that went into constructing such fanciful photographic visions.” Not only do these images toy with the idea of portraiture, they test the boundaries between real and surreal, the nature of time, and whether or not reality can be depicted in a photograph. John Rohrbach's essay encourages these interpretations. Is that woman looking out coyly from behind a fur muff really a man? How can one man be simultaneously playing both sides of a chess board while also sitting in the middle observing the game? And here is another man in four stages of getting dressed: shaving, brushing his shoes, etc. etc. all surrounding his own profile, in handsome mustachioed perfection. A woman stands with palette and brush in hand, in front of two easels with nearly identical paintings – or are those photographs? Is she copying the

original? Is she retouching a copy? In short, these cabinet cards can stop time or show multiple points in time, they can show the many facets of a person, or an alter-ego, or they can show reality or create an alternate reality. These prodigious feats were accomplished by ordinary people in unremarkable photo studios with a mass-produced stock of backgrounds and papier-maché props. Today we can re-invent ourselves with the selfie, the Zoom background, even the prankish cat-face filter. Truly, there is nothing new under the sun, and I do admire these Victorians for excelling at their own version of self-fashioning.

*Reviewed by Karen Zukowski*

Karen Zukowski is an independent writer and historian of nineteenth-century visual culture. She is the book review editor of *Nineteenth Century*.



## *The Newport Experience: Sustaining Historic Preservation into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

Jeannine Falino.  
Scala Arts Publishers, 2020.

This book marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Preservation Society of Newport County, and documents its role in preserving eleven significant

Newport estates while becoming a powerful voice in regional preservation. The idea for the book came from Chicago philanthropist and preservationist Richard Driehaus. He urged the Preservation Society to publish their story, not merely to celebrate the properties in a handsome, well-illustrated volume, but to offer guidance to like-minded organizations about the struggles, pitfalls and triumphs – as well as failures – in such an undertaking. The book presents the history of the Society while offering lessons from the experiences of 75 years.

Author Jeannine Falino, a curator and specialist in American decorative arts, deftly organizes a voluminous amount of information to tell the stories of the acquisitions and the challenges that followed, as a plan for restoration, maintenance, conservation, interpretation, and visitor access had to be developed for each property. Although many of the properties were gifts, the costs of stewardship require *constant* fundraising; structures, collections, and landscapes all demand equal attention.

The tale opens in 1945, when Hunter House, the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century harborside residence of a wealthy merchant, was purchased by a pair of concerned residents to save it from sale and demolition. The Preservation Society was soon formed to take over the house, joining the small but growing preservation movement in Newport and its surroundings. The new board sought the help of experts in the history of Newport architecture and furnishings, and in 1952 commissioned a survey of important buildings worth preserving. Today they are the stewards of eleven houses known collectively as the Newport Mansions. The landscapes of these properties form the Newport Mansions Arboretum.

Newport may seem to have been uniquely positioned to succeed. The city had the fortunate combination of many significant structures spanning three centuries; scholarly recognition of its furniture, decorative arts, and painting; and the tourist allure of Gilded Age mansions and Narragansett Bay. There was a growing circle of concerned citizens, and the Society had access to wealthy donors. This history makes it clear, however, that even with advantages not shared by many communities, historic Newport was on the decline, and it took strong people with vision to reverse the momentum, using influence, connections, organizational skills, and flexibility in collaboration with other civic groups in negotiating with city agencies and commercial interests. The Preservation Society's

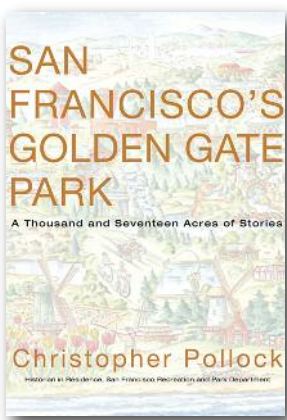
successful alliances have given them a strong voice in local improvement and natural beautification projects in Newport County.

New challenges have arisen over the course of seven decades as deferred maintenance, emergencies, and growing visitation (450,000 to The Breakers in 2019) have necessitated expensive repairs or logistical solutions. The controversial proposal to erect a visitor center on the grounds of The Breakers met strong opposition as a neighborhood group and members of the Vanderbilt family argued against alteration of the original landscape. After ten years and revisions to its proposal, the Society prevailed and the Welcome Center was opened in 2018. The decision to reach new audiences and points of view led to innovative use of spaces and technologies: The Elms Servant Life Tour; Beneath the Breakers, a tour of its 1895 state-of-the-art basement, tunnel and boiler room; and the installation of a gallery for changing thematic exhibitions in the ballroom at Rosecliff. At Chateau-sur-Mer, GPS technology has enabled self-guided landscape tours.

The book was published on the eve of the COVID-19 shutdowns, an unforeseeable emergency forcing the abrupt closing of the houses and broad staff layoffs. At this writing, the gardens and houses have begun to reopen after more than a year of online lectures, virtual events, and continued fundraising. In her afterword, Executive Director Trudy Coxe shares her “Observations from the Field,” and projects confidence for the future. The Newport Experience is a significant chapter in the annals of historic preservation in America; it should be read by preservationists, historic house museum staff and trustees, and all who know and love Newport and its mansions.

*Reviewed by Liz Leckie*

**Liz Leckie** has been the Assistant Director of the London Summer School since 2011, and serves on the Summer Schools Committee. She received a Master of Arts in History Museum Studies from Cooperstown Graduate Programs and worked as a curator in historic house museums. She is currently on the board of several preservation organizations, and lives in New York’s Hudson River Valley.



## *San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, A Thousand and Seventeen Acres of Stories*

Christopher Pollock.  
Norfolk Press, 2020.

Seeing the need to provide green spaces amid rapid urbanization, many cities in the Victorian Era created large parks open to the general public. San Francisco saw that

need and moreover wanted to announce to the world that it had arrived. As a response, the city created one of the grandest: Golden Gate Park. Christopher Pollock's new book, an expanded and updated version of his 2001 guide, brings the history of every square acre of Golden Gate Park alive.

While organized around the geography of the park, proceeding from east to west, the book is a hybrid of guidebook and history. At the start of the book we learn that Golden Gate Park was not designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, as so many assume, but is the product of the hard work and grand visions of engineer William Hammond Hall and botanist John McLaren. The feat of turning 1017 acres of sand dunes into San Francisco's "lungs" began in 1871. The six sections of the book guide the reader through every nook and cranny of the park, providing history, engineering, horticulture, and whimsy. The park's crown jewel is the Conservatory of Flowers, opened in 1879, the oldest public greenhouse in California and one of the largest in the United States. At the other end of the park stand two windmills, also beacons of Victorian architecture. Pollock

also documents things that have vanished, such as the 1882 Casino and the 1872 Bell Tower. Horticulture and landscape forms are a core part of the book as well. A thorough documentation of the dells, gardens, and lakes explains how these oases of greenery came to be, as well as how they are used, maintained, and appreciated today.

Pollock gives us a trove of knowledge and so much more. He does not shy away from correcting misinformation about items in past guidebooks, or from lamenting when there is no information to be had. This honesty imparts the strong feeling that one is reading a love story, a compilation of fascinating facts, miscellanea, and dreams of long-past designers at work while park-goers strolled the grounds in top hats and parasols. This is the perfect book for the Golden Gate Park visitor, but, with its generous inclusion of photographs, both historic and contemporary, it will also be treasured by armchair enthusiasts of public parks and history.

*Reviewed by Cindy Casey*

**Cindy Casey** is a member of the board of the VSA and a retired historic restoration contractor. She writes prolifically and reads even more. In the last few years photography has become more than a hobby for her.

# Milestones

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## The Irish Countess: Constance Georgine Gore-Booth

*Anne-Taylor Cahill*

Born into the Anglo-Irish nobility, Constance Georgine Gore-Booth began life among the privileged. Her father, Sir Henry Gore-Booth, was a noted Arctic explorer. He was the owner of Lissadale House, a 79 room mansion nestled in 36 square miles of County Sligo, Ireland.

Constance and her siblings had an idyllic childhood. Constance (Con) noted her primary interests were painting, literature and riding. Con was also fascinated with ancient Celtic tales of Queen Maeve of Connacht, the Warrior Queen.

Unlike many Anglo-Irish landowners, Sir Henry has a deep concern for the welfare of his tenants. During the Famine of 1879 he provided free food for them. This concern for the less fortunate rubbed off on Con and her sister Eva. The two sisters developed a social conscience and eventually both acted dramatically on it.

In her young adult years Con wished to train as a painter but the only art school in Dublin admitted only male students. Her parents then sent her to London to study at the Slade School. Here she became a painter and also became interested in social activism. She joined the National Union of Women's Suffrage Society. The call of a painting career was strong and Con went to Paris where she became a student at the prestigious Academie Julien. Unlike most of its contemporaries the Academie admitted both men and women, although the sexes studied separately. The Academie had students from over 50 countries. Truly it was a cosmopolitan atmosphere.

During her time in Paris, Con was described as tall (6'4") with red gold tawny hair. With an outgoing and friendly personality she was a drawing card for friends both male and female. She wore a ring on her wedding finger, declaring she was married to her art. She could be seen frequently riding around Paris on her bicycle in the company of her several beaux. One of them was Count Casmir Markievicz. Both Con and Casmir enjoyed the Paris party scene. They often took in theatricals and costume balls. At one ball Con's dignity was offended and Casmir challenged the culprit to a duel in the Bois de Vincennes. The offender ended up in the hospital for a prolonged stay.

Con and Casmir were married in London in 1900 with the Prince of Wales in attendance. The couple spent their honeymoon bicycling around the Normandy countryside. For a while they lived in Paris but soon moved back to Ireland as Con was pregnant. Her daughter was named Maeve after the Celtic Warrior Queen. It was a foreshadowing of the future.

In 1903 the couple settled in Dublin, entering fully into the Anglo-Irish social and cultural life. Con was involved in the founding of the United Arts Club, designed to promote the Irish language and culture. It was through this group that Con became



Constance Georgine Gore-Booth, the Countess Markievicz (1868-1927), c. 1915. Courtesy Library of Congress.

enmeshed in the Irish nationalist movement. Many Irish nationalists were members of the club. Soon after being supplied with Irish revolutionary journals Con began her political career.

Soon she joined the Sinn Féin and the Daughters of Ireland, both revolutionary organizations. Con attended one of her first meetings wearing a ball gown, long gloves and a tiara. She had just come from a reception at Dublin Castle, the British Headquarters! Naturally her reception by the anarchist group was cool. However, when she offered to sell her tiara to fund their fledgling newspaper they warmed up considerably. Supporting the cause of women workers Con continued her political activities. Con and her sister Eva campaigned against Winston Churchill, who would not support the women. She drove a coach drawn by 4 white horses through Manchester distributing anti-Churchill leaflets while her sister Eva made speeches from the open coach.



Perhaps her most outstanding effort in the cause of Irish Home Rule was the establishment of The Fianna. Ostensibly this was a boys' club modelled after Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts. In reality it was a "boy's army" formed to train Irish youth in the use of firearms against the British. Con believed these boys needed to be trained mentally and physically in the cause of Irish independence. Promoted as National Boy Scouts, it was popular and well attended. The boys went camping, trained and drilled like soldiers, and learned to shoot. Con, an expert shot, handled the weapons training personally. Tailors dummies dressed in red coats were used for target practice.

Con's first brush with the law occurred in 1911 when King George V was to visit Dublin. She and a group of nationalist protesters burned the Union Jack and scuffled with the police. Further activities of this nature got her in hot water, not only with the authorities but also with her family. They deemed her a "traitor to her class." In 1913 Con joined the Citizens Army, a volunteer group organized to protect demonstrators from the British police. Demonstrations, protests and strikes continued, aided and abetted by Con and her colleagues. Because the strikers were without pay and had no money for food, Con and her friends organized soup kitchens all over Dublin.

The 1916 Easter Rising saw Con as second-in-command of the Irish Citizen Army. They battled for 6 days but were eventually overcome by 2000 British troops. Con was taken off to a London prison where she was court marshaled. Found guilty for armed rebellion against the King she was given the death penalty, to be carried out by a firing squad.

Because Con was a woman her sentence was commuted to life in prison in England. She served 14 months and was released under a General Amnesty. Back home in Ireland, she was at it again. Relentless, she was arrested for anti-conscription protests. While in prison she ran as a Sinn Féin candidate for the British Parliament. She won. Con was the first woman to be elected to the British Parliament. However, she did not take her seat in keeping with Sinn Féin policy of refusing to pledge allegiance to the King. (Of note; Nancy Astor was the second woman elected to Parliament but the first to take her seat).

Once out of prison Con ran as a candidate from the newly formed Irish Parliament. She was elected Minister of Labor. Again she was arrested for "treasonous language," urging the Irish to "burn everything British except its coal." After 5 months in prison for this offense she was released and continued her campaign for Irish Independence. Con was often arrested for "disturbing the peace" but it did not faze her. She even went to America to gather support for the Irish cause. Everywhere she went she was welcomed royally. Fifty reporters greeted her when she arrived in New York. Her reputation as a fierce fighter for Irish independence had preceded her. In two months she had covered most of America from coast to coast and into Canada. In Philadelphia she raised nearly \$50,000. Never one to stand her dignity, while in Philadelphia she noticed an ex-prostitute who had been in prison with her in England standing in the corner of a rally. Immediately she went over and greeted the ex-prostitute effusively. Eyebrows were raised but Con did not care. Her American trip ended with a monster rally in Madison Square Garden. She was called Ireland's "Joan of Arc" by the *Boston Telegraph*.

Ill health eventually caught up with Con. She died July 15, 1927 surrounded by her family and friends. Her body lay in state

in the Dublin Rotunda, guarded by her beloved Fianna. Over 250,000 people came to pay their respects. The funeral procession was huge, so large that it took 2 hours to go from the Rotunda to the nearby cemetery. Eight truckloads of flowers escorted the cortege. The *Irish Times* said it best, "Countess Markievicz flashed like a meteor across the heavens at the dawn of the Irish Republic."



**Anne-Taylor Cahill** is a professor of philosophy at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, and serves on the national board of the Victorian Society in America. She is a Docent Emeritus of Hunter House Victorian Museum and has a special interest in Victorian silver and nineteenth century landscape paintings.

For further reading:

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