

# Nineteenth Century



# Editorial

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## The Center May Be Holding

Last year, when Eve Kahn (author of two articles in this edition) asked if I wanted an introduction to Ellsworth, Kansas, I said yes right away. My wife and I were embarking on a book tour of the state, with arranged readings of our historical novel at bookstores and libraries. The novel takes as its springboard the history of house framing and the town of Newton, Kansas.

Eve's Kansas research for her biography of Zoe Anderson Norris, excerpted in this issue, had led her to the head of the Ellsworth County Historical Society. That person, in turn, arranged for my wife and me to speak at her daughter's school. The Ellsworth Junior and Senior High School's agricultural studies teacher was our host (ag studies to those of you who grew up in the Midwest). She also teaches journalism and I am here to tell you that if this teacher's eighth-grade students are any indication, both of these tenuous trades are going to be in good hands.

Situated smack in the middle of the state and the union, on the western edge of the bluestem prairie, Ellsworth is a town of 3,000. Farms stretch to the horizon in every direction and the historical society is well worth a visit.

During fifth period, from 12:48 to 1:31, these students were a rapt audience for my talk about sod houses, early prairie life and a balloon-framed house called Ambleside. The astute questions afterward were lively. Of all our readings, fifth period at Ellsworth Junior and Senior High School was, for both the parent and the citizen in me, the most rewarding.

On our way out of school we stopped by the library and noted they were promoting, in a long glass vitrine, a number of contemporary books on today's thorniest cultural topics. It reminded us that this central state was the home to many of the earliest progressive movements. There was one of the first states to allow women to vote in municipal and state elections, well before the 19th Amendment was passed. It was home to the Free-Staters before the civil war, and in

1958 Wichita was the locus of one of the very first successful civil rights lunch-counter sit-ins, at a Dockum Drug Store, eighteen months before the more famous Woolworth's sit-in in Greensboro, North Carolina. Via referendum, the citizens of Kansas continue to address progressive issues.

The center may be holding just fine.

*Warren Ashworth, Editor*



*Ellsworth Junior and Senior High School, Ellsworth, Kansas.  
Photo by author.*



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Warren Ashworth

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For information on *The Victorian Society in America*, contact the national office:

24 Wilkins Avenue  
Haddonfield, NJ 08033  
(856) 216-8124  
Fax (856) 216-8125  
info@victoriansociety.org  
victoriansociety.org



Cover: Bluff grading in Kansas City, Missouri, 1886. Courtesy Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.



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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.



354 North Market Street, Wichita, 1904. The Norris family lived in the home in 1892. Lewis Academy, where Zoe taught in the 1880s, is seen in the background, to the right of the home. Courtesy Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum.



# A Queen of Bohemia is Born:

NEW YORK WRITER, REFORMER, AND BON VIVANT ZOE ANDERSON NORRIS

Eve M. Kahn

The writer and reformer Zoe Anderson Norris (1860-1914) reinvented herself around 1900 as a Manhattan-based activist battling anti-immigrant prejudice, after an inauspicious decade as a restless Kansas housewife. This excerpt from my biography in progress for an academic press, provisionally titled *Queen of Bohemia Predicts Own Death: The Forgotten Journalist Zoe Anderson Norris, 1860-1914*, explores seeds that she planted for her career in 1890s Kansas. (My exhibition about her runs March 1-May 13, 2023 at the Grolier Club in Manhattan.) She managed to offend many Wichitans with her first published writings, foreshadowing her unfiltered firehose of words in New York.

Some background: Zoe was born in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, the 13<sup>th</sup> of 15 children of Henry Tompkins Anderson (1812-1872), a theologian. He had been a young widower with two small children in 1841 when he married Zoe's mother, Henrietta Ducker (1819-1897). The family moved often around Kentucky, scraping by on Henry's earnings as a pastor, teacher, and writer for religious periodicals run by his fellow followers of the Disciples of Christ evangelical faith. As his health failed, he focused unprofitably on retranslating the New Testament from ancient texts. In the mid-1870s, widowed Henrietta began homesteading with a few of her children in central Kansas, at the outskirts of Ellsworth, a cattle-ranching boomtown. The region was filling with Federal veterans (including one of Zoe's brothers), who were being given prairie acreage as U.S. government forces drove off Native Americans. Zoe meanwhile attended an elite girls' boarding school in Harrodsburg and then married at age 18 ("like an idiot," as she put it in a 1913 memoir) to a local confectioner, Spencer W. Norris, age 21.

By 1887, Zoe, Spencer and their children Rob and Mary Clarence (known as Clarence) had moved to booming Wichita, and Zoe also spent time at her family's Ellsworth homestead, itself besieged by droughts and locusts. (Those experiences inspired her 1911 self-published novel, *The Way of the Wind*.) Spencer ran grocery stores in downtown Wichita (and cheated on his wife), who busied herself painting on china, playing piano, and bedecking their home with flowers for parties. She meanwhile took notes for future publications. By the time she and Spencer divorced in 1898 (on grounds of his admitted unfaithfulness) and she fled eastward, she was already being lauded for her fiction and journalism in newspapers and periodicals. Rob stayed in Wichita, working for railroads, and Clarence headed off with Zoe—mother and daughter spent two years in Europe before settling in New York, which Zoe barely ever left again.

Zoe based most of her writings on her own experiences, whether traveling unchaperoned in Europe while thronged by disabled beggars; homesteading in Kansas; surviving marriage to



Zoe Anderson Norris (1860-1914), *The Midland Monthly*, September 1895. Courtesy of the author.

an adulterer; and weaving through New York's outdoor markets and dire slums. Her firehose of words—including three novels and a short-story collection—continued until days before her death in 1914. By then she had spent five years running her own bimonthly magazine, *The East Side*, headquartered at her East 15<sup>th</sup> Street apartment turned "literary sanctum," and focused on desperate immigrant poverty. Her motto, as she descended into poverty: "To fight for the poor with my pen."





449 North Market Street, Wichita, c. 1884, in the vicinity—and size, material and architectural style—of the Norrises' mid-1890s family home. Courtesy Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum.

She raged against evils that persist, including policemen brutalizing peddlers, charity executives splurging on themselves, child laborers tottering under burdens, millionaire deadbeat dads evading prosecution, and predatory bosses cornering underlings. At times she reported undercover, dressed as a stranded tourist or a blind immigrant accordionist, to see how passersby, philanthropists, and policemen would treat her. (She can be considered “the Nellie Bly you’ve never heard of”). She leavened her activist prose with odes to the city’s beauty: glittery fish piled at market stalls, skyscraper windows “flashing back the fire of the sun,” winds strumming the Brooklyn Bridge’s cables like “a great aeolian harp.”

She also found time to throw weekly parties for her intentionally disorganized organization, the Ragged Edge Klub, full of writers, reformers, performers, artists, and scoundrels. She became known as the Queen of Bohemia, knighting her friends with a wine bottle as a scepter—Baron Bernhardt of Hoboken, for instance, and Lady Betty Rogers of the Bronx. In

*The East Side’s* last issue, she described her vivid dream that she would soon die. She mailed out the print run, attended one last Ragged Edge party, and died of heart failure. After her accurate premonition made headlines in hundreds of newspapers, she fell into undeserved obscurity—until now.

This chapter shows how, between 1893 and 1895, she unwittingly prepared herself to rule bohemia and defend New York’s downtrodden.

In late 1893, Spencer and Zoe Norris began settling into the last home they would ever own, on land in one of Wichita’s many new subdivisions. On a main thoroughfare a few blocks away, Spencer ran a grocery store that specialized in fruit and candy.<sup>1</sup> The Norrises moved an existing house to their property from somewhere else, likely from a nearby failed subdivision (Wichita was at the tail end of a real-estate boom)—for part of the building’s journey, it was floated on a river. The house was near Lewis Academy, a Presbyterian-run coed school. It occupied one of many large Romanesque masonry buildings that Wichitans





Spencer Norris in his delivery wagon for his store at 104 North Main Street, Wichita, c. 1895. Courtesy Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum.

had confidently erected for their institutions and businesses in a new city marketed as “the Windy Wonder of the West, the Peerless Princess of the Plains.”<sup>2</sup> Zoe carved out some kind of space at home for a typewriter, while furnishing the interior “with bamboo, wicker, satin pillows, lace curtains, paintings, portraits and family objects.”<sup>3</sup> With a pseudonymous weekly column in the *Wichita Eagle*, she introduced her prose stream about outcasts, overzealous reformers, overhyped cultural arbiters, and overoptimistic fiancées. And she established her viewpoint as a keen-eyed and confident yet self-mocking provocateur.

One of Zoe’s friends in Wichita was Margaret Lemon, a suffrage activist and writer, born in Illinois and raised in Missouri, who knew Susan B. Anthony. Margaret had set a local journalistic precedent with a weekly column in *Wichita’s Journal*, “Woman’s Tidings,” which ran from 1888 to 1890 under the genericized byline “Mrs. M. Lemon.” Like newspapers nationwide, the *Journal* realized that content targeted at women

consumers would please advertisers as well.<sup>4</sup> The column reported on female professionals worldwide, for instance writers and editors in big cities “making a good living with their pencils,” who also successfully juggled household responsibilities and helped charities protecting the vulnerable. Women could surpass men in various fields, Margaret predicted: as architects taking family needs into consideration, perhaps, or as skeptical jurors who “would at once see through a blackmailing scheme of a designing female.”<sup>5</sup> The column died when Margaret moved to New York with her husband William, a Federal veteran and jack-of-various-trades including hotelkeeping, and sons Joseph and Courtenay. (The latter would become a Socialist orator and notorious womanizer, providing fodder for Zoe’s early 1900s writings about New York’s womanizing Socialists.) The *Journal* kept advertising Margaret as a contributor, one of Kansas’s “most attractive and entertaining writers,” for months after the column ended. She did sporadically report back to Wichita from Manhattan on her busy life supporting women’s groups as well as



writing and editing. When she dined at Delmonico's with clubwomen and the showman P. T. Barnum, her mention of exotic Kansas sent him into "a sort of wonderment." She marveled at apartment house clotheslines, tiers of "pullies and ropes" attached to backyard telephone poles, and she contrasted urban millionaires' pampered dogs with tenement children "ill fed and shivering,"<sup>6</sup> prefiguring Zoe's observations from her East 15<sup>th</sup> Street "literary sanctum."

It is not clear what inspired Zoe to debut her own column in the *Eagle*—her only previous paid work had been teaching art, first in Harrodsburg and then at Lewis Academy. When she adopted the pseudonym "Nancy Yanks" for her *Eagle* column,

reports on travels and parties. Among "the four hundred of Wichita" observed on their rounds were Zoe's friends, her children, and herself: "Mrs. S. W. Norris entertained at cards." Nancy Yanks reported that at a gathering of an intellectual women's club named after ancient Alexandria's female scholar Hypatia, a member read aloud from Margaret Lemon's recent *Godey's* magazine article. (The Hypatia Club was modeled after Sorosis in New York, the first professional women's club in the U.S., founded in 1868 by the journalist Jane Cunningham Croly and named for fleshy fruits.) Margaret Lemon reported for *Godey's* on her journey that may have inspired Zoe's later wanderlust, traveling by ship and rail from New York to St.



Woman's Department display in the Kansas Building at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago. Courtesy of the author.

was she jokingly pretending to be a Yankee, or warning that she would be yanking at people's egos and heartstrings? Or, in a Southerner's sly nod to a region dominated by Federal veterans, was she referring to Nancy Hanks, Abraham Lincoln's mother, whose family had lived in the Harrodsburg area? The *Eagle* targeted women readers with promises that Yanks, "a society leader in Wichita, who attends all the pink teas and afternoon receptions, and hears herself abused on all sides," would "pour hot-shot" on local foibles.<sup>7</sup> Each column ended with a mixture of short zingers—"Wichita needs a society for the punishment of people who turn and scowl when a baby cries in church"<sup>8</sup>—and

Augustine, surviving rough seas akin to an "untamed beast, with her rampant paws unfolded in her fury."<sup>9</sup>

Yanks mocked Wichita's "World of Sweldom" while chatting at her fireside with a sleepy cat, describing mediocre local musicians who "wrangle and fight and scratch" and descend on any enviably pretty competitor: "they tear her to shreds and throw the fragments to the four winds." When an upwardly mobile young woman returned "brilliantly plumaged" but crestfallen from a fancy tea, snubbed by women whose glances "would have frozen a volcano," Yanks listed literary heroines—"Cleopatra, Juliet, Desdemona and Rosalind"—who would have



made for better company. Yanks pleaded with eligible bachelors, “in the interest of humanity,” to pursue homegrown brides rather than flock to “the dim farawayness of mystic splendor” exuded by new arrivals liable to bring along “a regiment of hungry relations.” One young man told Yanks about the temptations of waltzing with belles—“almost heaven”—while fashionable pins on their gowns tore apart his dress coats that he not afford to repair “owing to the financial stringency.” The town’s bartenders could barely concentrate on formulating any “real scientific cocktail” (Kansas technically but inadequately imposed prohibition), since saloon doorways were besieged by female temperance activists,

weeping and wailing...Men hate to see women weep, though they keep right along doing a thousand things to make them weep.

Yanks diagnosed one root problem as women desperate enough for marriage to wed alcoholics, whose sons inherited the vice.<sup>10</sup>

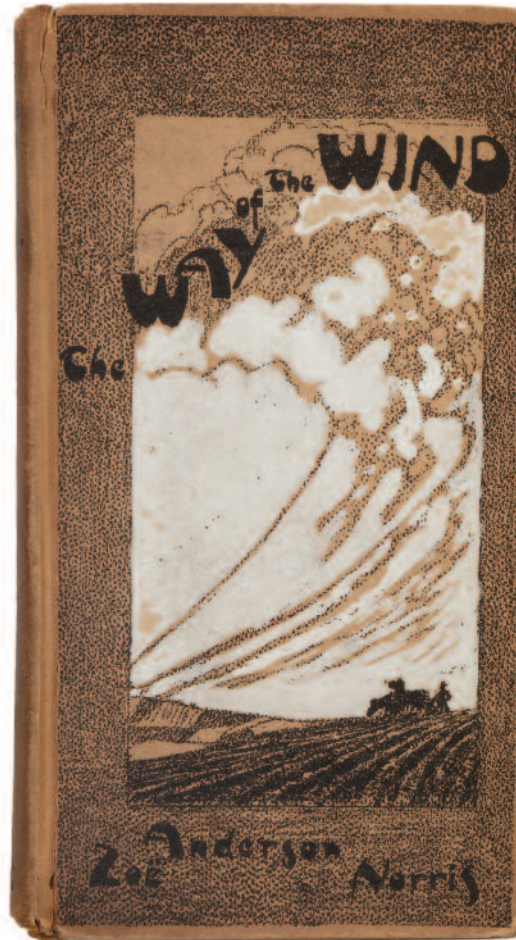
Yanks stopped by a downtown store much like Spencer’s and spied a fiancé dodging in and out, “stealing time that should have been spent with his betrothed.” When the frantic young woman came seeking him, a clerk lied that the man had been nowhere sighted—after all, falsehoods “come easier to most men” than truths. The column speculated that the man’s “dire and sinister” reasons for slinking around would eventually be exposed: “nothing ever happens in this rustling, dashing, hurrying world of ours that somebody doesn’t find it out.” As well-educated local wives stuck by their hearths, painting on china and stitching “regrets, disappointments, sorrows and tears” into their embroidery, Yanks envisioned husbands enjoying “the gay, laughing, rollicking world.” Just as ancient Alexandrian men had dismembered and martyred Hypatia, “because she dared to be learned,” vengeful men were shredding intellectual women’s reputations. The firebrand Populist orator Mary Elizabeth Lease was being accused of having affairs with male politicians on the campaign trail, all while she “dodged decayed eggs” tossed at the podiums by misogynists and other enemies. (Kansas was nonetheless progressive in allowing women to serve in government jobs, for instance as mayors and schoolboard members.) Yanks defended Mary Lease from such “base calumny!” Would-be lovers would be put off anyway by Mary Lease’s “gaunt, spare, majestic figure,” thin mouth and “small and piercing eyes,” Yanks theorized.” (Zoe stayed in touch

with six-foot-tall, unflappable Mary Lease, profiling her for the *New York Sun* in 1904—by that point both interviewer and interviewee felt most at home in New York.)<sup>12</sup>

Yanks reported on the joys of starting to write, with a tall tale of a depressed middle-aged wife who wept so much that she was used to irrigate neighboring farms’ crops. Whenever she started to cheer up, locals would fear drought, so they elicited fresh tears by reminding her “of the unhappiness of her having married the wrong man.” The woman gathered strength to “have revenge on the world” by combing a dictionary for rhymes to adapt into poetry. When newspapers published the results, “news being scarce,” she became known as a “dreamy-eyed poetess with the blighted life.” Readers made “frightful accusations” that the Yanks pseudonym belonged Mary Lease, or to a poetess—“Could anything be worse?”—who came from Kentucky. To fend off the Kentuckian charges not quite convincingly, the columnist claimed to pronounce r’s and ing word endings at least occasionally. She stereotyped her real-life homeland’s men, “too busy shooting or too lazy to work” and apt to slay or be slain “in an affair of ‘honnah,’” while exhausted wives dread the bullet-riddled corpses “brought home on a shutter.”<sup>13</sup>

Yanks’ last column lambasted “pious ladies,” better off “at home taking care of the children,” who were trying to discourage vice by tearing down posters depicting scantily clad women performers. The damage to advertisements for ballerinas on horseback just increased their allure for impressionable boys—“everything prohibited gains a twofold interest”—and for the writer herself: “show bills haunt me sleeping or awake...the first thing you know I shall be running away with a circus.” An unfunny aphorism was buried in that column’s society news listings: “nearly every married woman has thought seriously of leaving her husband.”<sup>14</sup>

One outraged reader suggested Yanks should consider that the boomtown “may grow more cultured” with age and wondered, “have you ever had any acquaintance with the best men?”<sup>15</sup> It is not recorded whether such humorlessness persuaded the *Eagle* to silence Yanks after 14 appearances, and how Zoe felt about losing her platform. Wichita papers gave the Norrises friendly coverage for years thereafter, and the Murdock family, owners of the *Eagle*, remained friends with Zoe and her children. In 1910, *Eagle* contributor Sallie Toler (whose actor son Sidney went on to fame as Hollywood’s “Charlie Chan”) attended



Zoe Anderson Norris, (1860-1914) *The Way of the Wind*, 1911. Courtesy of Nicole Neenan.

a Ragged Edge party and reminisced about Zoe's early writings that had "cruelly caricatured" and alienated close friends. But only after Zoe's death did the *Eagle* unmask her as Yanks, who had produced "a snappy gossip column" while briefly distracting herself from provincial constraints: "Wichita was too small a field for such an ambitious spirit."<sup>16</sup>

Zoe laid low for the next few months, drawing press attention only for painting violets on china and giving piano performances of a wedding march and a Hungarian rhapsody by Liszt (which she would hear played by restaurant orchestras during Ragged Edge dinners). In late summer 1894, after suffering a bloody nose when her carriage pony stumbled and threw her and Clarence into the street,<sup>17</sup> she headed off to Chicago, where her youngest sister, Pickett, had settled. (Zoe had visited the previous summer, while participating in a group show of women's painted china at the domed Kansas building at the World's Columbian Exposition, amid folk-art feats such as the phrase "Sun Flower State" fashioned from dried sunflowers and a Grecian urn "made entirely of oats.")<sup>18</sup> On that trip, Zoe would receive the news of a fatal fire at her home that made headlines. Zoe, while packing for the train journey home, had sent a letter about her imminent return to her housekeeper, Mary McEachran. The servant set about putting the household "in apple pie order," airing out rugs and portieres on a backyard clothesline. Then she melted some paraffin floor wax in a shallow pan on the gas stove. An explosion of "burning grease" set her aflame. She ran to an empty lot across the street, rolled "in the long grass," and collapsed. Firemen "tenderly carried" the victim back into the house. She died the following day at her own home, surrounded by her husband, "an honest and industrious Scotchman" who worked for a coal company, and their small children. An *Eagle* reporter found the bereaved living in "honest poverty," their rooms "destitute of any comfort," the kind of conditions that many Wichitans did not realize were in their midst: "one-half of the world don't know how the other half lives."<sup>19</sup>

A day or so before the tragedy, Zoe had recounted a chilling nightmare to Pickett. Zoe had dreamed of Mary McEachran "stretched upon a cheap iron bedstead" in an uncarpeted room, bandaged and anesthetized into a stupor, her long hair splayed on the pillow and strangely unharmed despite gruesome wounds

elsewhere. In Zoe's 1898 newspaper feature about women's accurate dream premonitions over the years, she recalled herself as "on the verge of nervous prostration" immediately after the 1894 fire. Friends swarmed about her, "relating similar incidents until the whole world seemed on fire and filled with poor, screaming creatures fleeing from the flames." Her remaining days in the North Market Street house were "filled always with terrible visions of the burning woman."<sup>20</sup> In an *East Side* investigation into charities' broken promises to help families of victims of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, Zoe remembered her Wichita home as "accursed" after the paraffin explosion, a place where she never again felt "another moment of happiness." Interviewing immigrants who had keened over their loved ones' charred remains reminded her of the foreboding nightmare, followed by "the horror in my own eyes at the sight of Mary" and guilt over "the tragedy of her death in my service."<sup>21</sup>

It is not clear how badly the blaze damaged the North Market Street home. Within a few months, while Zoe was visiting Kentucky relatives, Spencer held a stag party with mandolin music in rooms "resplendent with the shaded lights of piano lamps."<sup>22</sup> Zoe threw themed parties—offering candy-making lessons, festooning the portieres with roses—and painted arrow-wielding cupids on porcelain vessels that were praised for "poetic suggestions and imaginative delights."<sup>23</sup> All the while, she was gearing up to publish fiction about the destitute.

Her first known writing outlet outside Wichita was *The Midland Monthly*, a short-lived, Iowa-based publication. It

combined travelogues, essays on Civil War figures, support for progressive causes including women's suffrage, and fiction focused on midwestern rural misery. A gilded cornstalk stripes the cover of the September 1895 issue with Zoe's story, "Janet." It is illustrated with a photo of the author in a wicker chair.

The story's eponymous heroine, a sunburned Kansas cowgirl, has been reduced to poverty as her father attends Populist rabblousing sessions in town and neglects farm work. (Was Zoe remembering her penniless father's zeal?) His group rants "against noblemen, monopolists, money-holders, and swells in general," while his family battles insect infestations and "the hopeless heat of the burning prairie." Janet falls in love with an Englishman from Runnymede, a real-life colony of British expats



Zoe's short story "Janet," appeared in *The Midland Monthly*, September 1895. Courtesy of the author.



about 50 miles southwest of Wichita. Founded in the late 1880s and abandoned by 1893, the boomtown inspired a number of Zoe's fictional sidekicks and villains over the years. It attracted émigrés with inflated aristocratic titles and tastes for frivolous pursuits, such as polo, bowling and steeplechase races. Janet dreams of escaping to the breezy oak groves and "shadowy meadows" of her suitor's homeland. But while the couple is roaming her family's pastures, a cyclone reddens the sky with "lurid light," causes a cattle stampede, and fells a massive tree branch. Janet is killed protecting her beloved from the bough; she dies as he futilely promises her "rest, and cool paths, and sheltered ways" in England.<sup>24</sup> Kansas newspapers praised Zoe's "pathetic tale of love, ending in a horrible tragedy" against a backdrop of Runnymede's "inexperienced and impractical people."<sup>25</sup>

In late 1895, she syndicated "The Sunshine Within," the first of many signed poems about accepting fate: "bitter winds with wailing moans and sighs" can be withstood "if sunshine dwell/ Within thy heart."<sup>26</sup> Wichita's weekly *Mirror* ran "Two Waifs," the first of her stories about homeless people starving and freezing. Tatters and Jimmy, the title characters, wait outdoors for food handouts during a yuletide banquet at a city mansion "where long icicles hung from the eaves like fringes." Orchestra music and "savory odors" waft out as the boys drowse in a portico, ignored by carriage drivers in fur overcoats and departing guests carrying souvenir roses. Some angelic-seeming girls are overheard complaining about party details, including

insufficiently waxed floorboards and outdated waltz tunes. When one girl estimates that the hostess's floral arrangements had cost enough to feed "an army of the poor," Tatters mistakes her for a sympathetic soul and pleads for help: "we're freezin' ter death." But she sends her driver to threaten the "horrid little beggar" with a whip. Tatters imagines that within the girls' satin bodices lay "heart-shaped lumps of ice" instead of hearts, as the boys sink into a fatal "slumber of infinite peace."<sup>27</sup>

Over the next few years, Zoe expanded her writing repertoire with happier endings, characters of varied social strata and ever more autobiographical material. Kansas reporters grumbled about her unflattering views of prairie life, and Wichitans snubbed her, as she prepared to leave behind the accursed house.



**Eve M. Kahn**, an independent scholar, was the weekly Antiques columnist for *The New York Times* from 2008 to 2016. She contributes regularly to the *Times*, *The Magazine Antiques*, and *Apollo* magazine and serves on the boards of organizations including the Grolier Club and the Victorian Society's New York chapter. Among her biography subjects are the nineteenth-century artist Mary Rogers Williams (subject of Kahn's 2019 book from Wesleyan University Press) and the forgotten journalist and reformer Zoe Anderson Norris (1860-1914), subject of her spring exhibition at the Grolier Club.

## Notes

1. The home was at 430 North Market Street and the store at 104 North Main Street.
2. Zoe Anderson Norris (hereinafter abbreviated ZAN), *The Way of the Wind* (New York: self-published, 1911), 166. Note that Zoe is what she preferred to be called, and according to her descendants it is pronounced to rhyme with foe, not zo-ee.
3. Details of the Wichita home come from unpublished 1970s biographical essays by Zoe's granddaughter Mary Chelf Jones.
4. This subject is deeply explored in Julia Golia, *Newspaper Confessions: A History of Advice Columns in a Pre-Internet Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).
5. Margaret Lemon, "Woman's Tidings," *Wichita Journal*, December 24, 1888, 7; March 23, 1889, 1.
6. Margaret Lemon, "New York Gossip," *Wichita Journal*, May 7, 1890, 1; "Correspondence," *Democrat*, March 23, 1895, 10.
7. "Look At This," *Wichita Eagle* (hereinafter abbreviated to *Eagle*), January 13, 1894, 5.
8. ZAN, "Beware That Man," *Eagle*, January 7, 1894, 6. This appeared under the Yanks pseudonym, as did other 1893 and 1894 *Eagle* articles credited to ZAN in these endnotes.
9. Margaret Lemon, "A Flying Trip to Florida," *Godey's*, December 1893, 746-753.
10. ZAN in *Eagle*: "She Has a Halo," March 4, 1894, 6; "Has Music Charms?," December 24, 1893, 6; "It Is Indeed Sad," March 11, 1894, 6; "Blames the Waltz," December 31, 1893, 6; "Beware That Man," January 7, 1894, 6.
11. ZAN in *Eagle*: "Dodges His Dove," February 4, 1894, 6; "Is Up On Her Ear," February 11, 1894, 6.
12. ZAN, "Mrs. Lease is Seen at Home," *New York Sun*, September 25, 1904, 6.
13. ZAN in *Eagle*: "Poetry Saved Her," February 25, 1894, 6; "Rises to Explain," January 28, 1894, 6.
14. ZAN in *Eagle*: "Ripped Them Off," March 18, 1894, 6.
15. "A Letter to Nancy Yanks," *Eagle*, February 15, 1894, 5.
16. Sallie F. Toler, "Saw Wichita Authoress," *Eagle*, July 17, 1910, 36; "Rests in 'Land of Lilies,'" *Eagle*, February 15, 1914, 2.
17. "The Gayer World," *Wichita Beacon* (hereinafter abbreviated as *Beacon*), April 7, 1894, 3; "The Auditorium Opened," *Eagle*, June 16, 1894, 5. "Town Topics," *Beacon*, August 4, 1894, 4.
18. *Report of the Kansas Board of World's Fair Managers* (Topeka, KS: Hamilton Printing Co., 1894), 48-51.
19. "Terrible Burns," *Beacon*, September 27, 1894, 4; "Her Sad Death," *Beacon*, September 28, 1894, 4; "Died of Her Burns," *Eagle*, September 28, 1894, 5. I am immeasurably grateful to Wichita historian James Mason for finding these articles, among other insights into Zoe's Wichita life.
20. ZAN, "Women Tell of Dreams," *New York Sun*, September 11, 1898, section 3, 5, and syndicated.
21. ZAN, *The East Side*, no. 20 (July 1912).
22. "Entertained the Boys," *Eagle*, December 13, 1894, 5; "In Society," *Beacon*, December 15, 1894, 3.
23. *Beacon*: "Birthday Party," February 16, 1895, 3; "Rose Reception," May 18, 1895, 3 and "Society," June 1, 1895, 3; and "A Very Successful Exhibition," *Eagle*, June 4, 1895, 5.
24. ZAN, "Janet," *The Midland Monthly*, September 1895, 253-255.
25. Several similar reviews appeared, for instance, "A Kansas Romance," *Eagle*, September 6, 1895, 4.
26. Syndicated widely after appearing in the *Eagle*, December 1, 1895, 4.
27. ZAN, "Two Waifs," *The Mirror*, December 21, 1895, 28.



Main Street, Richmond, Virginia, c. 1890. Photograph by Detroit Publishing Co. Courtesy Library of Congress.



# Caspar Wendlinger:

## A MERCHANT TAILOR AND THE MILITARY IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

Kristen E. Stewart

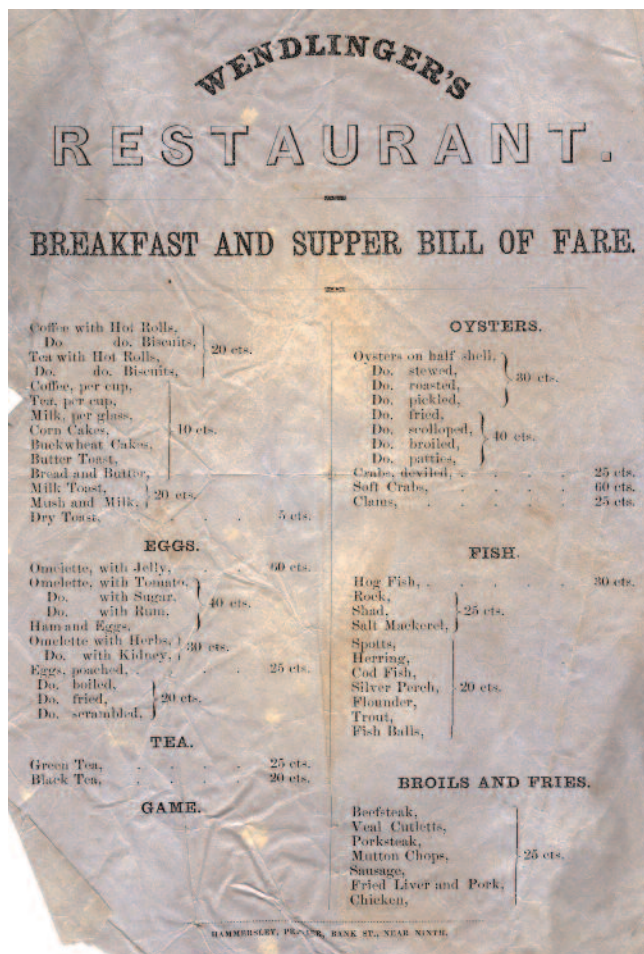
On March 18, 1924, the Richmond-based *News Leader* posted the image of a man named Caspar Wendlinger in a recurring column called “Remember Him?” a kind of history quiz based on photographs of community leaders taken during the previous century.<sup>1</sup> The profile described Wendlinger as a “well-known tailor, of a few decades ago,” noting that “he and his son, Anthony Wendlinger, made the fancy military uniforms for the state of Virginia during the Spanish American wars.”<sup>2</sup> When Wendlinger died on March 20, 1905 the same paper’s obituary affirmed his place in public memory as a military tailor, reading

Caspar Wendlinger, 87 years old, widely known in Virginia and even throughout the old Confederacy as a military tailor, died at 4:30 this morning of the effects of old age.

The column further noted that

...he had a tailoring shop in Main Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Streets and he has made uniforms for many of the distinguished officers of the Confederate States armies. He has made uniforms for the Staff officers of all Virginia’s governors since Holiday’s administration.<sup>3</sup>

The three Wendlinger-made garments in the collection of the Valentine Museum: a Confederate Uniform frock coat worn by Lt. William Washington Myers (1832-1893); a Virginia Governor’s Staff Uniform frock coat worn by George H. Burwell, Jr. as a staff member during the 1878-1882 administration of Virginia Governor, Frederick W. M. Holliday; and a Lieutenant’s Uniform frock coat made circa 1880 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Regiment confirm this association.<sup>4</sup> And yet, between 1850 and 1881, Wendlinger consistently identified himself in city directories not as a military tailor but as a “merchant tailor,” a custom tailor who works with textiles from his own hand-selected stock.<sup>5</sup> Only one of the many advertisements Wendlinger placed between 1850 and 1898 promoted his work as a “military tailor.” Posthumous eulogies and the material preserved by the Valentine memorialize an aspect of Wendlinger’s professional life that is almost invisible in fifty years of print promoting his fashionable merchant tailoring establishment, occasional masquerade costume shop, and restaurant. This narrow retrospective interpretation of Wendlinger’s complex career reflects the growing influence of a “Lost Cause” interpretation of the Civil War in Richmond at the turn of the twentieth century and provides insight into Wendlinger’s strategic acuity as he responded to a market alternately influenced by the immediacy and the memory of war. A review of Wendlinger’s advertisements and business notifications taken alongside an examination of



Wendlinger’s Restaurant menu, c. 1865. Courtesy of the Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

garments he produced will reveal the ways in which this immigrant Bavarian merchant tailor established a business model in Richmond that survived the Civil War, weathered the transformation of the American clothing manufacturing industry, and abetted a reframing of the Confederate rebellion with the memorial gloss of an honorable militia outfitted by an esteemed military tailor.

During Wendlinger’s career in Richmond, the city’s German immigrant community was supported by two primary German language newspapers. The *Richmonder Anzeiger* was founded by Burghardt Hassel as a four-page weekly in 1854.<sup>6</sup> Hassel added the Sunday edition, *Die Virginische Zeitung*, in 1861 and expanded the weekly publication to a daily edition in 1864.

Hassel continued publishing with minimal variation in frequency until the paper closed in 1917.<sup>7</sup> A second major daily paper, the *Virginia Staats-Gazette* was established in April 1870 by the Virginia German Publishing Company and quickly absorbed the short-lived *Richmond Patriot* which was founded in 1869 as a liberal alternative to the *Richmonder Anzeiger* and was active until 1904.<sup>8</sup> Wendlinger advertised extensively in both German papers as well as in the city's English language papers with frequent posts in the *Daily Dispatch* (1852-1884) and a small number of listings in the *Richmond Daily Times* (1850-1853), the *Richmond Dispatch* (1884-1903), and the *Times* (1890-1903).<sup>9</sup>

Born in Bavaria in 1818, Caspar Wendlinger emigrated to Richmond, Virginia in 1835, and began working with an established merchant tailor named William Allen in 1849 or 1850.<sup>10</sup> The first identified advertisement listing Wendlinger's merchant tailoring business was a post that ran for several weeks in December 1851 and January 1852 in the *Richmond Daily Times* and the *Daily Dispatch* announcing the dissolution of the tailoring firm of Allen & Wendlinger. Following this formal statement of dissolution "by mutual consent," Wendlinger alerted all present and future customers that

HAVING purchased the interest of William Allen, in the late firm of Allen & Wendlinger, I avail myself of this occasion to inform the customers of the firm and the public generally that I shall carry on the business at the old stand, where I will be happy to serve them with any article in the line of Merchant Tailors.<sup>11</sup>

This announcement marked the beginning of an over fifty-year career in downtown Richmond occupying several different Main Street locations, and finally opening just below the Virginia State Capitol Building on 917 Bank Street in 1876.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the 1850s, Wendlinger promoted his business in the *Daily Dispatch* with advertisements for "FINE GOODS, for gentlemen's wear," "an elegant assortment of Spring and Summer CLOTHS, CASSIMERES, VESTINGS &c." all of which he was "prepared to make up in the most fashionable style, and at moderate prices."<sup>13</sup> He frequently placed ads in "clusters," repeating the same announcement for consecutive weeks or months following the arrival of a shipment of goods

selected by himself with much care in the Northern cities, consisting of the most beautiful assortment of CLOTHS, CASSIMERES and VESTINGS it has ever been his pleasure to offer them...<sup>14</sup>

**C. WENDLINGER, MERCHANT TAILOR,**  
No. 124 Main Street,  
Respectfully invites the attention  
of his friends and the public generally, to his  
stock of **SPRING GOODS**, which he is now  
receiving, selected by himself with much  
care in the Northern cities, consisting of the most  
beautiful assortment of **CLOTHS, CASSIMERES**  
and **VESTINGS**, it has ever been his pleasure to  
offer them, which he will be happy to make up in  
the most neat and fashionable style, on reasonable  
terms. mh 14-6t



Advertisement for C. Wendlinger, Merchant Tailor. *Daily Dispatch*, March 14, 1854. Courtesy Library of Congress.

Wendlinger's publicity in German language papers in the 1850s could be far more personal by comparison and often took the form of third-party praise. When he moved from 124 to 146 Main Street, the paper's announcement began:

Our friend C. Wendlinger, known and famous as the best tailor in town, who finds it easy to conjure up an Adonis out of an inconspicuous figure, has left his old store on Main Street and now lives at 146 Main Street, a few doors below the Exchange Bank [author's translation].<sup>15</sup>

In fact, Wendlinger and the paper's editor may have indeed been friends, and when the publication relocated its own offices, the announcement communicated great neighborly esteem:

So that everyone can find us more easily, we also inform that Mr. C. Wendlinger is our nearest neighbor and that the Exchange Bank is only two doors from our office. So, from now on we have the art and the capitol as our nearest neighbors [author's translation].<sup>16</sup>

In both English and German papers, Wendlinger's refined taste in and access to quality fabrics as well as his artistic talent for cutting a fashionable figure set the tone for promotions of his made-to-order menswear.

In the 1860s, Wendlinger's frequent antebellum posts in English language papers advertising

Stock of CLOTHS, CASSIMERES and VESTINGS, &c, selected by himself in New York with great care, and not to be surpassed by any other house in the city

were replaced by rare but urgent announcements of stock received through enemy lines:

I have just received by the latest steamers which have run the Lincolnite blockade as excellent and choice a selection as has ever been offered for sale in this market...<sup>17</sup>

According to available evidence, promotion of Wendlinger's tailoring business ceased entirely in the *Richmonder Anzeiger* during the war. The southern secession and Civil War disrupted

**RUN THRU BLOCKADE!**  
I have just received by the latest steamers which have run the Lincolnite blockade as excellent and choice selection as has ever been offered for sale in this market, of--  
8,531 yards Regattas, (Hickories.)  
1,860 yards Calicoes.  
50 lbs. extra super. Italian Sewing Silk.  
1 case of English Canvas.  
16 gross Russian Gilt Braid.  
20 dozen Embroidered Gilt Stars.  
23 suits English Milton Cloths,  
60 pairs English Fancy Doeskin Pantaloon.  
2,000 yards white and black Jaconets, &c., &c.  
The public are respectfully invited to call and inspect for themselves as to prices and character of the goods.  
**C. WENDLINGER,**  
at 29-12t\* 146 Main street.

Advertisement for goods acquired by C. Wendlinger, despite the Union blockade. *Daily Dispatch*, September 23, 1862. Courtesy Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*.



material deliveries and required creative entrepreneurship for survival. Wendlinger responded by opening an eponymous restaurant and by producing uniforms. While Wendlinger's restaurant deserves its own dedicated examination, it is worth noting here that the restaurant took clear priority over Wendlinger's merchant tailoring business which virtually disappeared from city directories and advertisements during and shortly after the war.<sup>18</sup>

The first printed reference to Wendlinger's production of military garments was a "help wanted" ad placed twice in late September of 1859, seeking freelance or journeyman tailors to assist with a large order for the Richmond Light Infantry Blues militia.<sup>19</sup> More than two weeks before John Brown's antislavery raid on Harper's Ferry galvanized the organization of volunteer militias in Virginia, Wendlinger anticipated the increased demand for militia uniforms.<sup>20</sup> Three years before he took on the large Richmond Light Infantry Blues uniform order, Wendlinger's name was included among a list of German community leaders authorized to register new members of a rifle club.<sup>21</sup> That same year the German Rifles, a largely German volunteer militia, was renamed the Virginia Rifles and assigned the lettered designation of Company K under the auspices of Virginia's 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry.<sup>22</sup> According to Christian B. Keller's comparative analysis of German community responses to the Civil War in Virginia and Pennsylvania,

Richmond's Germans organized themselves for military service along the lines of the prewar militia group, the German Rifles, and the German singing society, the Gesangsverein Virginia.<sup>23</sup>

When the Gesangsvereins Quartett-Club announced a masked ball event in the *Richmonder Anzeiger* in January 1859, readers were alerted that

beautiful costumes are available at a reasonable price from Mr. C. Wendlinger and through Mr. B. Krause from the theater cloakroom [author's translation].<sup>24</sup>

Though not the first time Wendlinger had offered masquerade costumes for sale, it was the first time they were promoted in support of a German social club. If the rifle club for which Wendlinger registered members in 1856 was indeed Company K, Wendlinger may have been involved in multiple civic organizations that helped to further the German community's patriotic commitment to Virginia's state defense while cultivating fraternal community among fellow countrymen and expanding his professional range.

According to Lee A. Wallace, Jr.'s extensive report on the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Infantry, Wendlinger was one of two Richmond-based tailors with whom members of the Richmond City Guard,

Company B of the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Volunteer Infantry were advised to leave measurements for "undress" or informal uniforms on April 19, 1861, two days after the Virginia Convention of 1861 approved

an Ordinance of Secession.<sup>25</sup> This niche branch of his business allowed Wendlinger to benefit from the growing militarism of a restless nation. The three Wendlinger-made garments in the Valentine's collection can help shed light on the way his work as a "military tailor" demonstrates the prescient sense of a changing market that would characterize his long career. The earliest example is a Confederate uniform frock coat worn by Lt. William Washington Myers. Prior to this research, a note in the museum's digital record stated that the jacket's buttons were made by Wendlinger, whom the record mis-identified as a Richmond button maker.<sup>26</sup> In fact, the buttons on this and on the museum's other two Wendlinger garments are stamped with a backmark that reads "C. WENDLINGER / Richmond Va." According to Warren K. Tice's extensive guide, *Uniform Buttons of the United States*, southern retailers often relied on custom backmarks to conceal northern manufacture of this necessary trim on Confederate uniforms.<sup>27</sup> In particular, Cecil Anderson has identified that Wendlinger buttons present a flaw prevalent in buttons made by the Scovill Manufacturing Company in Waterbury, Connecticut.<sup>28</sup> Although examples have been found at Civil War sites, Tice notes that most

collectors date the Wendlinger backmark to a post-Civil War manufacture. However, if the buttons on the Valentine's frock coat are original, this uniform may provide evidence of earlier use.<sup>29</sup> If original, these buttons show Wendlinger's marketing expertise, serving to brand his goods before garment labels were widely used and helping to promote his company as a respected establishment worthy of significant investment by the Confederate government.

Wendlinger's military commissions ensured steady employment during the war when it may have been difficult or imprudent for citizen clients to purchase fashionable menswear. During this period of military production, Wendlinger likely honed some manufacturing techniques that would enable him to compete with the growing ready-to-wear market following the war. According to Claudia B. Kidwell and Margaret C. Christman's exhibition catalog supporting The National Museum of History and Technology's exhibition *Suiting Everyone: The Democratization of Clothing in America* (September 21, 1974-August 31, 1978), "the custom tailor may be regarded as the seminal figure in the story of the democratization of clothing."<sup>30</sup> According to Kidwell and Christman, innovations made in custom tailor's shops like Wendlinger's combined the efficiency of standardization with quality materials and workmanship and raised consumer expectation for "the most fashionable style(s), and at moderate prices."<sup>31</sup> Kidwell and Christman identify the



Top to bottom: Confederate frock coat button stamped "C. Wendlinger," and interior stitched label, "C. Wendlinger, Richmond, Va." c. 1861. Photographs by Terry Brown. Courtesy of the Valentine Museum.



L to r: Confederate frock coat, c. 1861; Governor's Staff frock coat, c. 1878. Caspar Wendlinger, tailor. Photographs by Terry Brown. Courtesy of the Valentine Museum.

military clothing complex as another main site for innovation in menswear manufacture. The United States Army Clothing Establishment, created in Philadelphia in 1812, developed a system that ensured uniformity in production by procuring, inspecting and cutting fabric and other materials under one roof rather than relying on supplies ordered from a collection of independent outside manufacturers.<sup>32</sup> As a merchant tailor, Wendlinger had long ago established a practice of procuring his own material stock and could ensure uniformity for his military clients. Wendlinger managed quality of workmanship on the premises by hiring journeymen tailors to expand production capacity as needed. From his position in the Richmond market, Wendlinger was fully prepared to pivot towards uniform production during the war.

In the 1870s, as Richmond began to recover from the devastation of the war, Wendlinger's tailoring advertisements and business listings returned to city directories and, according to the printed evidence, the merchant tailor returned to business as usual.<sup>33</sup> During that same period, the historical reframing of

the Civil War espoused by Edward Alb Pollard in the 1867 publication that gave the "Lost Cause" its name, gained influence. Publications such as the *Southern Historical Society Papers* (est. 1876) and former Confederate president Jefferson Davis's *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* (1881) maintained a sympathetic view that

the exhibitions of generalship, chivalry, humanity, and all that noble sentimentalism that properly belongs to the state of war "ha(d)" been more largely on the Confederate side.<sup>34</sup>

Caroline E. Janney, the John L. Nau III Professor in History of the American Civil War and director of the John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History at the University of Virginia, notes that six founding tenets characterize the "Lost Cause" lore that flourished in the decades following the war:

1. Secession, not slavery, caused the Civil War.
2. African Americans were "faithful slaves," loyal to their





Lieutenant's frock coat, 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Regiment, c. 1880. Caspar Wendlinger, tailor. Photograph by Terry Brown. Courtesy of the Valentine Museum.

- masters and the Confederate cause and unprepared for the responsibilities of freedom.
3. The Confederacy was defeated militarily only because of the Union's overwhelming advantages in men and resources.
  4. Confederate soldiers were heroic and saintly.
  5. The most heroic and saintly of all Confederates, perhaps of all Americans, was Robert E. Lee.
  6. Southern women were loyal to the Confederate cause and sanctified by the sacrifice of their loved ones.<sup>35</sup>

In this environment, Wendlinger's wartime commissions for the Confederacy conferred an aura of honor to the business and attracted commissions for the manufacture of uniforms for elite civil servants and the growing ranks of local volunteer militia. Wendlinger's son, Anthony, had joined the family business in 1876 and the two tailors were likely glad for a new source of commissions.<sup>36</sup>

In 1902, *The Times* of Richmond identified Mr. C.

Wendlinger as the veteran tailor on Bank Street responsible for making new uniforms for members of Virginia Governor Montague's staff. The administration was adopting the color blue for staff uniforms and the paper explained that this change was

an innovation upon those worn by the staff of Governor Tyler. Governor O'Ferrall adopted the Confederate gray, and it was followed by Governor Tyler. Twelve of the eighteen suits are now about ready, and the others will be completed shortly. The entire outfits will cost about 250 each.<sup>37</sup>

An altered syndication of the story then made its way through newspapers in Morristown, New Jersey; Tazewell, Virginia; Savannah, Georgia; and Picket, South Carolina:

A. Wendlinger of Richmond, Va., a military tailor, now 80 years old, made the uniforms for Jefferson Davis' staff and for the staff of every Governor since then, and has been selected to make the uniforms for Governor Montague's staff, who has changed the color from Confederate array to bright blue.<sup>38</sup>

Putting aside the papers' mistaken conflation of Caspar's name with that of his son and partner, Anthony, what is most notable in this piece is the insistent association of Mr. Wendlinger with the long defeated Confederacy. Somewhat ironically in this case, the Wendlinger-made late-nineteenth century Governor's Staff uniform frock coat in the Valentine's collection was worn by George H. Burwell, Jr. to attend the 1881 Yorktown Centennial Celebration—an event intended to heal the remaining division between the northern and southern states by celebrating a shared victory during the American Revolution.<sup>39</sup> Worn during Governor Frederick W. H. Holliday's term in office, this navy wool jacket with ivory wool collar and cuffs predates Governor O'Ferrall's Confederate gray. The buttons, as noted above, are pressed or stamped with the Wendlinger backmark. This jacket is also marked with a maker's label. A black silk ribbon on which the words "C. WENDLINGER / Richmond Va." are woven in gold demonstrates Wendlinger's continued adaption to the evolving commercial market. By the 1880s, the woven label was a well-established branding mechanism in both haute couture and ready-to-wear design and increasingly seen in the work of custom tailors. Despite the efforts at Yorktown, the "Lost Cause" pseudohistory of the antebellum South gained influence in Richmond. A former slave owner himself, the longtime tailor benefited from the condemned institution that turned many Southerners to the "Lost Cause" to reframe their own histories.<sup>40</sup>

The third Wendlinger jacket in the Valentine's collection is described in the accession record as a Lieutenant's frock coat from 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Regiment from "the collection of the donor," Mrs. Benjamin B. Weisiger III, and dated circa 1880.<sup>41</sup> No wearer is identified, but the coat is trimmed with a Wendlinger label and buttons. Although the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Infantry Regiment was disbanded at the end of the Civil War, it is possible that this later coat was commissioned by a Civil War veteran to attend one of the many events celebrating Confederate veterans at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>42</sup> An advertisement in the 1885 edition of *Chataigne's Directory of Richmond, Va.* hints at Wendlinger's own status as a kind of Confederate "veteran" and invites the custom of former and current militia members by boasting a list

of military companies “he has uniformed,” some of which retained active chapters.<sup>43</sup> This direct outreach to militia men in the 1880s corresponds with a period of mobilization among volunteer militias in response to civil and labor unrest during Reconstruction. In 1886, the National Guard Association sponsored a Militia Reform Bill with the aim to “secure federal assistance and a role as a front-line reserve to the Regular Army.”<sup>44</sup> The bill failed, but an associated rider was approved, and the annual available militia expenditure increased from \$200,000 to \$400,000.<sup>45</sup> Encouraged, perhaps, by increased interest, the Wendlinger firm regularly identified itself by the designation “military tailor” in city directories after 1882.<sup>46</sup>

When Caspar Wendlinger died in 1905, his reputation for outfitting Virginia’s military men far overshadowed his long and successful career as a merchant tailor, a restaurateur, a masquerade costumer and (undiscussed in this paper) a real estate developer. Not long before his death, the *Richmond Dispatch* printed the very first newspaper advertisement to promote the Wendlinger firm’s military tailoring background. Under the auspices of “The Oldest and Only Military Tailors in the State / A. Wendlinger & Co. / No. 917 Bank Street / formerly C. Wendlinger,” the ad reads “Attention, Soldiers!” and boasts a selection of “Military accouterments of all kinds furnished at manufacturers’ prices.”<sup>47</sup> The Spanish-American War was underway and 5,326 Virginians serving in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Virginia Volunteer Infantry Regiments were mustered alongside Virginians serving in the Army, Navy, and Marines.<sup>48</sup> America’s Congressionally approved participation in the conflict is cited today as the act that marked America’s entrance onto the global stage as a military power.<sup>49</sup> The American regular and volunteer armed forces would expand their reach and their demand for military “accouterments” indefinitely thereafter. As his father had done three decades ago, Anthony Wendlinger directed the family business towards the business of war, well aware that war would always be in fashion.



**Kristen E. Stewart**, is a PhD student in the Media, Art, and Text Program at Virginia Commonwealth University with an MA from the Fashion Institute of Technology. Most recently she served as the Nathalie L. Klaus Curator of Costume and Textiles for the Valentine Museum in Richmond, Virginia. Previously she worked as a research associate in the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and curatorial assistant in the Department of Textile Arts of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Her research interests focus on the intersection of social power and gender identity as manifested in established sartorial codes.

## Notes

- Mr. Wendlinger’s first name was printed with several different spellings in nineteenth century publications. Variations included “Caspar,” “Casper,” and “Kaspar.” For the purposes of this article, his name will be spelled “Caspar” following the spelling selected for his gravestone.
- “REMEMBER HIM?,” *News Leader* (Richmond, VA), March 18, 1924, 4.
- “OLD MR. WENDLINGER DIED LAST NIGHT,” *News Leader* (Richmond, VA), March 20, 1905, 6.
- Caspar Wendlinger, Confederate Frock Coat, 1861-1865. Valentine Museum, V.64.127. Gift of Mrs. A. Preston Ferry. Caspar Wendlinger, Governor’s Staff Frock Coat, 1878-1882. Valentine Museum, V.49.03, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. George Burwell. Caspar Wendlinger, Lieutenant’s Frock Coat, 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Regiment, c. 1880. Valentine Museum, V.84.02.04. Gift of Mrs. Benjamin B. Weisiger III.
- “Wendlinger, C. merchant tailor,” *Montague’s Richmond Directory and Business Advertiser for 1850-1851* (Richmond, VA: W. Montague, 1850), 109; “Wendlinger, C. mer. tailor,” *The Richmond Directory and Business Advertiser for 1852* (Richmond, VA: WM. L. Montague, 1852), 131; “Wendlinger, C. merchant tailor,” *Butters’ Richmond Directory for 1855*, (Richmond, VA: H. K. Ellyson’s Steam Press, 1855), 170; M. Ellyon, “Wendlinger, C. merchant tailor,” *Richmond Directory and Business Advertiser for 1856*, (Richmond, VA: H.K. Ellyson, 1856,) 241; “Wendlinger, C. merchant tailor,” *Second Annual Directory for the City of Richmond 1860*, (Richmond, VA: W. Eugene Ferslew, 1860), 226; “Wendlinger C. restaurant 916 e Main, and mer. tailor, 917 Bank,” *Boyd’s Directory of Richmond City 1870*, (Richmond, VA: Bates & Waddy Bros., 1870), 233; “Wendlinger, C. merchant tailor,” *Richmond City Directory 1871-2*, (Richmond, VA: B.W. Gillis, 1871), 170; “Wendlinger, C. merchant tailor,” *Richmond City Directory 1873-4*, (Richmond, VA: B. W. Gillis, 1873), 146; Sheriff & Chataigne, “Wendlinger C. merchant tailor,” *Sheriff & Chataigne’s Richmond City Directory 1874-5*, (Richmond, VA: West, Johnston & Co. Publishers, 1874), 281; “Wendlinger, Caspar merchant tailor,” *Sheriff and Co.’s Richmond City Directory 1876-7* (Richmond, VA: Benj. R. Sheriff, 1876), 209; “Wendlinger, Caspar, merchant tailor,” *1877-1878 Chataigne & Gillis Richmond City Directory*, (Richmond, VA: Chataigne & Gillis, 1877), 273; “Wendlinger Caspar, merchant tailor,” *Chataigne’s Richmond City Directory, for the Years 1879-’80*, (Richmond, VA: J.H. Chataigne, 1879), 254; J.H. Chataigne, “Wendlinger C & Son (Caspar & Anthony Wendlinger), merchant tailors,” *Chataigne’s Directory of Richmond, VA*, (Richmond, VA: Baughman Bros., 1881), 320.
- Between January 4 and March 27, 1858 the *Richmonder Anzeiger* was published under the title *Taglicher Richmonder Anzeiger*.
- “Richmonder Anzeiger,” Browse by Title, *Virginia Chronicle*, Library of Virginia, accessed October 15, 2022, <https://virginiachronicle.com/cgi-bin/virginia?a=c&cl=CL1&sp=RA&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->.
- “About *Virginia Staats-Gazette*. [volume] (Richmond, Va.) 1870-1904,” *Chronicling America*, The Library of Congress, accessed October 15, 2022, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85026936/>.
- Search results “Wendlinger 1850-1905,” *Virginia Chronicle*, Library of Virginia, accessed October 15, 2022, <https://virginiachronicle.com/?a=q&hs=1&r=1&results=1&txq=wendlinger&dafdq=&dafmq=&dafyq=1850&datdq=&datmq=&datyq=1905&puq=DD&txf=txIN&ssnip=txt&e--1850---1905--en-20-DD-1-byDA-txt-txIN-wendlinger-----Richmond%2C+VA>.
- “MR. WENDLINGER DIED YESTERDAY,” *Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), March 21, 1905, 8; “Allen & Wendlinger, merchant tailors,” *Montague’s Richmond Directory and Business Advertiser for 1850-1851* (Richmond, VA: W. Montague, 1850), 8.
- “NOTICE.,” *Richmond Daily Times*, December 19, 1851, 2; *Ibid.*, December 19, 1851, 3; *Ibid.*, December 20, 1851, 3; *Ibid.*, December 25, 1851, 3; *Ibid.*, December 27, 1851, 3; *Ibid.*, December 29, 1851, 3; *Ibid.*, December 30, 1851, 3; *Ibid.*, December 31, 1851, 3; *Ibid.*, January 2, 1851, 3; *Ibid.*, January 3, 1851, 3; *Ibid.*, January 5, 1851, 3; “NOTICE.,” *Daily Dispatch*, January 14, 1852, 1; *Ibid.*, January 15, 1852, 1; *Ibid.*, January 16, 1852, 1.
- “WENDLINGER, C. merchant tailor,” *Montague’s Richmond Directory and Business Advertiser for 1850-1851* (Richmond, VA: W. Montague, 1850), 109; “Wendlinger, Caspar merchant tailor,” *Sheriff and Co.’s Richmond City Directory 1876-7* (Richmond, VA: Benj. R. Sheriff, 1876), 209.
- “JUST received a fresh supply of FINE GOODS,” *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), May 16, 1854, 3; *Ibid.*, May 17, 1854, 3; *Ibid.*, May 18, 1854, 3; *Ibid.*, May 19, 1854, 3; *Ibid.*, May 20, 1854, 3; “C. WENDLINGER, MERCHANT TAILOR,” *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), April 7, 1858, 3; *Ibid.*, April 8, 1858, 3; *Ibid.*, April 10, 1858, 3; *Ibid.*, April 12, 1858, 3; *Ibid.*, April 13, 1858, 3; *Ibid.*, April 14, 1858, 3; “C.



- WENDLINGER, MERCHANT TAILOR," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), March 9, 1859, 3; *Ibid.*, March 11, 1859, 1; *Ibid.*, March 12, 1859, 4; *Ibid.*, March 15, 1859, 4; *Ibid.*, March 16, 1859, 4; *Ibid.*, March 18, 1859, 4; *Ibid.*, March 25, 1859, 4; *Ibid.*, March 26, 1859, 4; *Ibid.*, March 28, 1859, 4; *Ibid.*, March 29, 1859, 4; *Ibid.*, March 31, 1859, 4; *Ibid.*, April 1, 1859, 4.
14. "C. WENDLINGER, Merchant Tailor," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), March 14, 1854, 2; *Ibid.*, March 15, 1854, 3; *Ibid.*, March 16, 1854, 3; *Ibid.*, March 17, 1854, 4; *Ibid.*, March 20, 1854, 3.
  15. "Unser Freund C. Wendlinger...", *Richmonder* (VA) *Anzeiger*, June 17, 1857, 2.
  16. "Städtisches," *Richmonder* (VA) *Anzeiger*, July 24, 1858, 6.
  17. "C. WENDLINGER, Merchant Tailor," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), April 18, 1856, 4; "RUN THE BLOCKADE!," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), September 23, 1862, 4.
  18. "Wendlinger Casper (*sic*), restaurant, 916 e Main." *The City of Richmond Business Directory and City Guide*. Richmond, VA: Mills & Starke, 1866.
  19. "WANTED—JOURNERMAN TAILORS," *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), September 26, 1859, 2; *Ibid.*, September 28, 1859, 2.
  20. Lee A. Wallace, Jr., *1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Infantry*, (Lynchburg, Virginia: H.E. Howard, 1984), 7.
  21. "Schützen – Gesellschaft," *Richmonder* (VA) *Anzeiger*, May 10, 1856, 2.
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  37. "BLUE IS ADOPTED," *The Times* (Richmond VA), February 15, 1902, 6; According to the inflation calculator on [www.officialdata.org](http://www.officialdata.org), \$250 in 1902 is equivalent in purchasing power to about \$8696.80 today. At a moment when mass-produced ready-to-wear was gaining traction in the menswear market, but before our modern expectation for fast clothes at cheap prices had fully set in, Wendlinger's top tier prices only occasioned a minor note in the news. As a point of comparison, bibliographic profiles by Rosemary Reed Miller and Lisa E. Farrington of the renowned Richmond, Virginia-based Black dressmaker, Fannie Criss Payne, have suggested that she charged her wealthy white clients up to \$200 for custom-made dresses during the same period. While Criss Payne's elaborate dresses required more hours of labor, Wendlinger's reputation as an esteemed tailor working for the Governor's office undoubtedly increased the perceived value of his work. As a merchant tailor, he would have charged for the materials, fitting and construction.
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Sidney J. Hare (1860-1938) with his garden at their home, "Harecliff," c. 1927. Courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri-Kansas City.



# “Diverse and Unorthodox Interests”:

## LANDSCAPE GARDENER SIDNEY J. HARE

### *Carol Grove*

The career of Sidney J. Hare (1860-1938), the elder partner of the Kansas City landscape architecture and planning firm of Hare & Hare, spanned the late nineteenth century into the twentieth. His projects reflect changing aesthetic sensibilities and priorities in the emerging field of landscape. His first parks, “home grounds,” and cemeteries incorporated highly ornamental visual effects created by dense plantings that showcased color and texture: an approach that united horticulture and art. With time, his focus would shift to letting “nature speak.” His use of native plants (still considered weeds by those who preferred the exotic and pedigreed) was visionary as was his use of recycled materials at his home, “Harecliff,” and its garden. A life inspired by subject matter as diverse as paleontology, engineering, and photography would culminate in the creation of a refuge for wildflowers and birds, a place Sid described as “nature in her everyday garments.”<sup>1</sup>

Young Sid traveled by steamboat eleven days to get from his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky to Kansas City, Missouri. His parents, Christopher Columbus Hare and Isadora Bethurum Hare left Louisville with their four children in the summer of 1868, bound for Kansas City.<sup>2</sup> It would take steamboats plying the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri Rivers to reach their destination. Their new home lay in a bend of the Missouri near its confluence with the Kansas River, also known as the Kaw. The riverfront, by midcentury was lined with a riot of warehouses, saloons, and hotels. The main business thoroughfare, Levee Street, had been widened and paved but the few other streets remained a sea of mud or a desert of dust depending on the season.<sup>3</sup>

Sid attended Kansas City public schools and as a youth he developed an interest in the natural world and built collections of insects, birds, and Native American implements, the last of which included flint knives he would later donate to the Smithsonian Institution. At Central High School his grades were good but not stellar. He studied civil engineering and photography, a skill he would master and apply later when working for the city. After graduation he took additional courses in engineering and surveying. Horticulture, a pursuit sparked by working with his mother in the family’s old-fashioned flower garden in Louisville, was another course of study. Later in life he would be known for his cultivation of native plants and their habitats, and as a general lover of nature. All of these studies were a remarkable fit for what would become his lifework.

At twenty-one Sid began his employment in the Kansas City Engineer’s Office with various job descriptions. His first years were spent assisting in survey work, as a transitman, and draftsman. With this hands-on experience, he assisted in the comprehensive surveying of the city that began in 1892 for the

newly appointed park commission. He worked side-by-side with his contemporary, George Edward Kessler, whose career in landscape had just begun with a large-scale project in nearby Merriam, Kansas. Each brought complementary skills to the job at hand. Kessler had a German education in botany, forestry, and landscape gardening, while Sid’s strength was his practical experience and knowledge of the topography gained from living in the city for twenty-four years. It was Sid who took Kessler to the rustic woods with panoramic views of the Missouri River, which would become Kansas City’s North Terrace Park, and pointed out the possibilities. Together the two walked the cow path that became Cliff Drive, the “*pièce de résistance*” of the entire Kansas City park system.<sup>4</sup>



Sidney J. Hare (1860-1938) and Mathilda Korfhage Hare, with their children, Herbert, and Nell, 1891. Courtesy Jackson County Historical Society, Independence, Missouri.

Sidney’s next proving ground would be Kansas City’s Forest Hill Cemetery, where he began as superintendent in 1896. His plan was to transform the existing cemetery and it was there that he refined his expertise in “what and where to plant.”<sup>5</sup> He cultivated and curated a collection of trees and shrubs meant to delight and to educate people in an art he considered equal to painting or sculpture. Working from the inventory in the cemetery’s nursery, and ordering new specimens from Thomas



Bluff grading in Kansas City, Missouri, 1886. Courtesy Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Meehan & Sons in Philadelphia, he planted more than six thousand new trees and shrubs within the year. These included ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*), various species of beech, and a collection of Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*) newly introduced to the country. Ultimately Forest Hill's over one hundred species and varieties included exotics like golden rain tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*) and pagoda tree (*Sophora japonica*)—some found nowhere else in the city (and now known to be invasive) and others—cucumber tree (*Magnolia acuminata*), Osage orange (*Maclura pomiferum*) and yellow wood (*Cladrastis lutea*)—"common native trees that may here be studied to advantage." Each was identified with zinc and aluminum labels bearing the scientific and common names.

As was typical with many projects, Sid returned often to add to Forest Hill. Some twenty planting plans, many drawn on linen, document the addition of thousands of bulbs; hundreds of perennials—larkspur, bleeding heart, and dianthus; oaks, and evergreens. Also typical was the plant list he provided, that cited botanical and common names, executed on a narrow scroll of vellum over six feet in length. He particularly wanted to entice students of botany to visit. Hare's intention was to create a place for the living as well as the dead that would rival Henry Shaw's garden (today's Missouri Botanical Garden) in St. Louis.<sup>6</sup>

When in his mid-thirties, Sid was slight of frame, and just over average height, with a head of curls and a full beard and mustache (that he wore his entire adult life). At the drafting



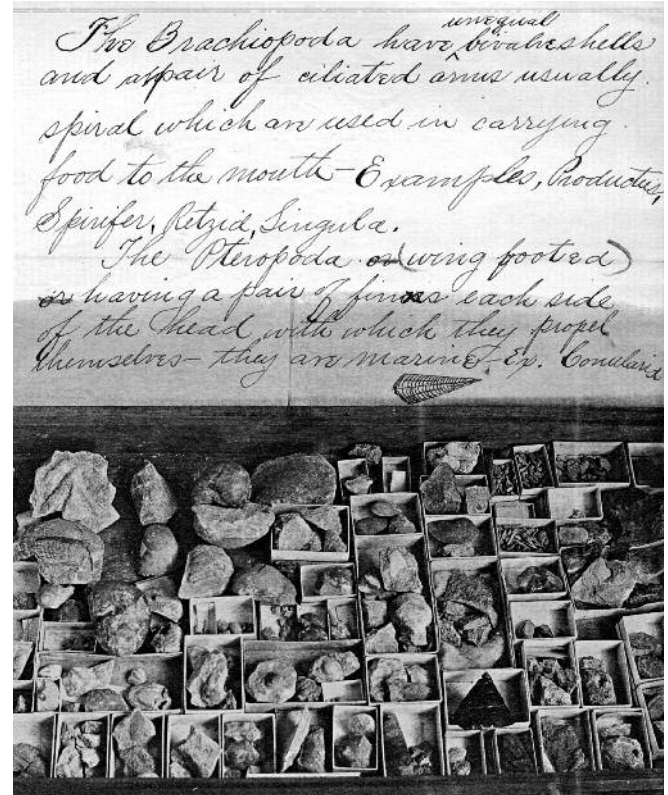
board and in the field he dressed in suit-and-tie (which for decades was anchored by a favorite pin). He was fair, honest, and derived pleasure from hard work and diligence. Modest by nature, he would come to shun self-promotion and be more concerned with the quality of his work than the dollar figure attached to it. Married for life to Mathilda A. Korfhage, he was deeply faithful and would become a member of Kansas City's Sixth Church of Christ, Scientist and its mother church in Boston. Yet he admitted to being high spirited and the extreme opposite of quiet. Straightforward, he was given to saying exactly what he thought as when he admonished one client's suggestion as outdated, that it spoke not to the future but to the "dead past," that it lacked taste and good judgment, and that its proposed organization and spatial planning suggested the rankest ignorance of true art.<sup>7</sup>

He was also a polymath. The geologist Richard J. Gentile has aptly noted Sid's "diverse and unorthodox interests"—some of which could be considered eccentric.<sup>8</sup> Among these were his ongoing study of Giza's Great Pyramid with the hope of locating the Ark of the Covenant in an inner chamber. He planned to distribute evidence he had compiled proving that the Icelandic explorer Leif Ericson had discovered North America. As an amateur scholar of biblical prophecy Sid's connection to the Church of Christ, Scientist extended beyond that of a devoted follower. He devised an indexing system for founder Mary Baker Eddy's book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. His research on prophecy and the church's history was worthy of publication according to Eddy's secretary Adam Dickey. And Eddy personally granted Sid permission to photograph and measure the 1906 extension of The Mother Church in Boston in his attempt to prove the building fulfilled a prophecy as described in the Old Testament's book of Ezekiel. During this research he drafted maps, with notations, and blue-line prints of the triangular plot of land on which the church sat and the surrounding context of the Back Bay. These maps and blue-lines, his photographs, and eighty six books from Sid's personal library, published between 1713-1924, are now in the collection of The Mary Baker Eddy Library.<sup>9</sup>

One of Sid's early and ongoing passions was the study of fossils. When he was sixteen his collection attracted much attention at a local exposition, and the following year he was inducted into the Kansas City Academy of Science as an honorary member. By twenty-one he was listed in the city directory as "geologist." He lectured on crinoids and published on trilobites and other rare fossils, illustrating his articles with his own drawings. When the public library dedicated museum space for the subject, he donated nearly half of his "geological treasures." In 1889, numerous Upper Carboniferous fossils, some yet unknown to science, were uncovered in the blue gray shale during construction of the Bullene, Moore, Emery & Company building downtown. The discovery revealed a new species that included eight crinoids. Amateur paleontologist Sid Hare and Edward Butts, then the city engineer, preserved the fossils and reported their findings to the scientific community. The findings were presented at the International Committee on the History of Geological Sciences Symposium in Dublin, Ireland, in 1905. Two of the crinoids—*Aesioocrinus harii* and *Ethelocrinus harii*—were named for Sid Hare.<sup>10</sup>

An on-going interest in photography was applied during his

time at the Kansas City engineer's office documenting newly paved sidewalks and brick streets. He recorded residential improvements in before-and-after photos and photographed the pollution shrouding the city, testing a "smoke consumer device," from atop City Hall. Reports illustrated with pages of stereoviews addressed the city's positive and negative aspects. Once he began his own practice, his photographs of a given site were used both



A portion of Sidney Hare's fossil collection with his notes, c. 1900. Courtesy Jackson County Historical Society, Independence, Missouri.

as "memory aids" (to refer to in the planning process) and illustrations for potential clients and in publications. For presentations he made lantern slides from his own negatives, hand-tinting them to create color images. Depending on the circumstances he used two types of cameras, a high-quality Premo 5 x 7 Reversible Back,<sup>11</sup> manufactured by the Rochester Optical Company, which could accommodate both film and glass plates, and a Kodak Hawk-Eye No. 2 stereoscopic camera, which he found especially useful to document the date and continuation of bloom on shrubs and flowers. The Hawk-Eye was also helpful in documenting types of bark and contrasting forms as revealed by the winter landscape. He proposed the use of halftone stereoscopic images in publications and presentations for their ability to reveal distances not perceived otherwise. On field trips and at professional meetings he was known for "snapping" pictures thus acting as a de facto historian. One meeting report describes a focused Hare shielding himself from drizzling rain with a giant water lily pad as he took a time-lapse photograph of the scene.

Forest Hill Cemetery in Kansas City, Missouri, was the springboard for decades of cemetery work where Sid would have

an active voice in the shaping of the “modern cemetery.” Joining the Association of American Cemetery Superintendents (AACS) in 1897, he presented the first of many papers, “The Influence of Surroundings,” at its annual conference.<sup>12</sup> He became involved in this reform movement that embraced new technology and horticultural methods and brought higher standards and professionalism to cemetery practice. Expanses of green lawn, curving tree-lined avenues, and monumental gates were the essence of the plan. Limiting the number of monuments cluttering the view, which created a parklike space rather than a “marble yard,” was another priority. Visually, it was a “cleaning up” of the picturesque aesthetic found in earlier rural cemeteries. Even icons such as Mount Auburn, in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1831), Laurel Hill, in Philadelphia (1836), and Green-Wood, in Brooklyn, New York (1838) were criticized for the excessive use of monuments and “the vulgar fashion of using stone” for the mere love of display. The absence of governing rules that allowed for varied types of fencing, plantings (some successful, others not), inartistic memorials, and accrued offerings made by family members resulted in a lack of “harmony with and subordination to nature.”<sup>13</sup> Not long after midcentury the rural cemetery, as a type, became a victim of changing taste and aesthetics. Critics believed cemeteries had reached “their lowest ebb” and called for reform.<sup>14</sup>

The AACS, formed in 1887, sought to achieve an improved version of the cemetery, different from the one defined in the first half of the nineteenth century. Its constitution defined its primary objective as “the advancement of the interests and the elevation of the character of the cemeteries of America.”<sup>15</sup> The modern cemetery movement included a push for higher standards and greater professionalism on behalf of superintendents and cemetery associations. Ongoing education, and dissemination of information, was imperative. Advancement was tied directly to management; it must address economics and efficiency and keep abreast of new technology and horticultural methods. But implicit in the group’s objective was a knowledge of landscape—practical and aesthetic—as a requisite for those in charge. According to Sid, best to

let one plan, one carefully studied plan, govern all planting of trees and shrubs, and this alone will make harmony and beauty of landscape.<sup>16</sup>

Grandview Cemetery in Salem, Ohio, Sid’s first independent design executed while still employed at Forest Hill, began in the fall of 1900.<sup>17</sup> On newly purchased land—the second farm beyond the railroad—a new cemetery was to replace the “disgraceful” burial ground near the town’s depot. Hare platted twenty acres of land into a series of ovoid and kidney-shaped burial sections, some more densely platted than others, arranged around a center section, a perfect circle. Sid insisted on no sunken walks or extensive grading and wanted the placement of drives along low points in the topography—following the general contours of the ground—which would “throw the burial sections above.”<sup>18</sup> Both sides of the thirty-foot macadam drives were to be

sodded and planted to contribute to a parklike effect and prevent a line of headstones from pressing up to the roadway as at the town’s old cemetery. From the south drive one passed Willow Lake and continued along streets named Cypress, Catalpa, Chestnut, and Linden, which looped around and back again to the entrances.

Sid submitted numerous watercolor and ink plans drawn on vellum and linen. Their decorative quality is like a fingerprint identifying his work. His plant lists, accompanied by detailed instructions, suggested that all plant material, of which he included a list with prices and sizes, come from Meehan & Sons. Specific (if somewhat complicated) written directions were sent to supplement his drawn plans. His “formula,” keyed to the planting plans, referred to plant type and number, lot and block



Plan for Grandview Cemetery, Salem, Ohio, 1900. Sidney J. Hare, landscape architect. Courtesy of State Historical Society of Missouri-Kansas City.

location. “A2 1/NW cor./W of 1,” for example, indicated one *Acer ‘Wieri’* (silver maple) to be planted in the northwest corner west of Block 1. A Mr. French was instructed to begin laying out the grounds, to start a nursery in the cemetery’s southwest corner, and to purchase plants and trees by the hundreds or thousands. A decade after Grandview was established, the grounds were expanded with the purchase of a thirty-acre tract of land that



included a beautiful ravine. Among Sid's first instructions was to clean up and remove straggly undergrowth but to leave clumps of native shrubs. A new lake, rimmed with golden willow and yellow birch, was proposed, as was a new pergola, abloom in three seasons, draped with Chinese wisteria, the double pink rose 'Dorothy Perkins,' and fall-blooming *Clematis paniculata*. Dozens of purple and white common and Persian lilacs lined the drive. Last, Sid instructed, "put a moon vine on the shelter."<sup>19</sup>

Planning for Greenwood Cemetery in Knoxville, Tennessee, began in 1905 with what Sid described as a long train ride south. In notes and sketches he vividly recorded the landscape and the culture he observed along the way. In his letter to "My Dear Ones at Home" he wrote of how the train seemed to stop at every bale of hay. He wrote of cypress swamps and bright red soil, of cattle grazing on cane and cornstalks. He passed magnolias, yucca, and a red-berried plant that reminded him of the Missouri native shrub "Wahoo" (*Euonymus atropurpureus*). Everywhere there was "cotton—cotton—cotton" planted in undulating rows to catch and hold the rainfall. He questioned why there were no orchards on such "ideal" ground, wrote of meadowlarks, and recorded (with emphasis) seeing crinoids, like those he collected in Kansas City, embedded in the rusty chert soil. In closing, Sid instructed his family to "keep these notes."<sup>20</sup>

At Greenwood, Sid adhered to the principles of design he had followed since his tenure at Forest Hill Cemetery, aiming for harmony of color, continuation of bloom, and contrasts in foliage (and bark) that would provide interest every day of the year. For each section of the cemetery he proposed key features such as small lakes for goldfish and water lilies. He designed an ornamental garden with beds reserved for "rare historic plants," likely Greenwood's collection that had come from Edith (Mrs. Theodore) Roosevelt's White House garden.<sup>21</sup> He was, however, sure to let the character of the site guide the plan. Native pines, dogwood, magnolias, and holly were left where "nature had planted them."<sup>22</sup> He took into account vistas, water supply, and the best location for roads. All was arranged against a backdrop of mountains "outlined against the sky."<sup>23</sup> He aimed to create what he thought the best cemetery should be: a "botanical garden, bird sanctuary and arboretum." The firm's work at Greenwood would continue over nearly three decades; in total sixty linen drawings and sixteen ink-on-vellum drawings guided its growth.

Although abundance and decorative effects were characteristics of many of Sid's projects, he understood the importance of "fitness" as it related to the surroundings as well as a client's character. He spent fifteen days in October and early November 1910 in Chestnut Hill, near Boston, assessing and drawing existing conditions of Mary Baker Eddy's estate grounds.<sup>24</sup> Plans to improve the grounds had begun that summer in letters to Adam Dickey, a former resident of Kansas City who lived at the house and served as her secretary.<sup>25</sup> "The natural beauty of the place should not be greatly disturbed but rather improved upon," Sid wrote, best to reflect "the one who lives within."<sup>26</sup> The firm reorganized the service areas—stable, laundry yard, garage—in relation to the residence, and proposed a lily pond and summer house, with a view to open pasture with grazing cattle. Eddy's death on December 3 of that year put a halt to the project but working relationships had been established. The following year the firm designed the grounds for Dickey's

house near Nantasket Beach in Hull, Massachusetts, and a few years later, those for his house in Cohasset.<sup>27</sup>

Fitness guided planning for another project that same fall. Sid was hired to draft a new master plan for Point Defiance Park, in Tacoma, Washington, a tract of just under 640 acres that jut into the tidal waters of Puget Sound. The park offered views of Mount Rainer, the highest mountain in the Cascade Range, and the snow-capped Olympic Mountains. Its native madrone trees (*Arbutus menziesii*) and thousands of old-growth fir, cedar, and hemlock contrasted with willows and colonies of ferns hidden beneath a dense understory. On its north tip, more than a mile of beach met the ocean where thousands came to swim in the summer.<sup>28</sup> Writing to George A. Hill, superintendent of the Tacoma park system and a former employee of the city cemetery, Sid assured that he would protect both the natural landscape and the pocketbooks of Tacoma citizens.<sup>29</sup> The park board's requirements were twofold. The new master plan must provide "an entirely new scheme" for the location of important features, and, most critically, it must preserve the natural wildness of the forest while increasing its accessibility for public use.

The following March Sid hiked the park, observing its landscape features—its shoreline, bluffs, and sandy soil—and recording them, in pencil and ink, on a large topographic map. On it, he also noted numerous recommendations and caveats, among them where to clear brush to capitalize on the view of Puget Sound and where stands of madrone trees were to remain untouched. After documenting the site with photographs and measurements, he returned to Kansas City to work on the project. This is the first large scale project that Sid and his son, Sidney Herbert, worked on together following the establishment of the firm of Hare & Hare in the summer of 1910.<sup>30</sup>

The illustrated preliminary report presented to Tacoma's Metropolitan Park District board in 1911 began by insisting on the prudent removal of underbrush and the avoidance of "ignorant clearing or denuding" of the land's native specimens. The report appealed to the citizens of Tacoma, and their sense of civic duty, to become "guardians" of Point Defiance Park. By dividing the park into three zones (or "Functions and Natural Divisions"), the plan accommodated active sports and the zoo at the very southeast tip, leaving much of the remaining 525 acres natural landscape. It promoted the increasing of "flower, fern, shrub, and tree" native to the Pacific Northwest, such as kalmia, rhododendron, and trillium. Proposed were "vista walks" providing long views through the arching woods and a promenade following the long sweeping curves of the beach. Plantings for fifteen new picnic grounds included Oregon grape, red flowering currant, and pussy willows (with instructions to cut back old growth for larger catkins).

One formal element, the Concourse, was proposed. It consisted of a broad walk lined with linden trees (*Tilia argentea*), pruned into broad flat heads, that linked twin pavilions.<sup>31</sup> Ornamental flower beds were confined to the entrances of main thoroughfares. All architecture within the park—the car shelter, Concourse pavilions, shelters along the Promenade—was to be consistent. Designed in a "Japanesque" style inspired by the Kinkaku-ji Temple in Kyoto, and still a key feature in the park today, it would be executed by the local architectural firm of Heath & Twitchell. Electric lines were to be buried underground, and providing water for fire protection was



Above: Sidney Hare at Harecliff, 1934. Autochrome by Frank Lauder. Courtesy Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

At right: Harecliff, c. 1930. Autochrome by Frank Lauder. Courtesy Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.



considered an essential feature of the plan. To that end, the firm advised that it would be wise to prohibit smoking.

In the spring of 1914, when Sid was fifty-four, he and his wife Mathilda purchased twenty-one acres of property he described as wild and as rugged as one could find within forty miles of Kansas City.<sup>32</sup> It sat to the southeast, beyond Swope Park—the city’s largest at 1,334 acres—atop a high ridge. They named it “Harecliff.” The house Sid eventually built, which remains a private residence today, would be perched overlooking the stream that wound along the edge of the property and be constructed of stone collected from their acreage and heavy hewn pine timbers recycled from old wooden bridges no longer in use. Not far from the house a rustic cedar pergola, inscribed “To Linger Long,” would offer shade; next to it a well, with an oak bucket and dipper, provided cool water. The long curving drive, lined with glacial rocks, would be planted with lavender moss phlox and just beyond, redbud trees and banks of forsythia that bloomed in the spring.

The couple envisioned Harecliff as a refuge for wildflowers and birds, not merely for themselves but for others to enjoy (in

later years they opened it to the public every Sunday).<sup>33</sup> It was to be a lesson in the value of native plants and a chance to experience the landscape’s constant shifting of color and shadow. They spent decades coaxing native plants to volunteer—to create “happy accidents”—among the rocks. With the zeal of a missionary, Sid would expound on the value of grasses and forbs. This was a place where ironweed (*Vernonia missurica*) and mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) were allowed to self-seed and scramble down the hillside and others, such as goldenrod and vervain, to colonize in sociable groups. In the spring, masses of pink bloom gave way to yellow. In the winter, reeds and vines stood out against the snow and water rushed



through tangles of gray-green stems. Sid could be found, often in shirt and tie and a fedora, raking leaves or leading tours showing off the giant mulleins sprouting from rock ledges or the *Portulaca thellussouri* he had “discovered wild” near Joplin, Missouri. At night he trained his telescope on the stars. He listened to birds in concert or watched the dawn break. Sid summed up his life at Harecliff in nine words: “I am satisfied. I am happy. I am rich.”<sup>34</sup> Sid Hare died unexpectedly of complications associated with heart disease at Harecliff four months before his seventy-ninth birthday.<sup>35</sup> Two days later he was buried at Forest Hill Cemetery where, in 1896, he officially began his career in landscape. A. D. Taylor, president of the American Society of Landscape architects (ASLA), sent a telegram on behalf of the organization describing him as “one of the few pioneers in blazing the trail which all professional

landscape architects are following today.”<sup>36</sup> Hundreds of commissions, across the country from Monongahela, Pennsylvania, to Mitchell, South Dakota, are to his credit.



**Carol Grove** taught as an adjunct assistant professor of American Art at the University of Missouri, Columbia, and specializes in the study of American landscapes and architecture. She authored *Henry Shaw's Victorian Landscapes: The Missouri Botanical Garden and Tower Grove Park* (2005) and, with Cydney Millstein, co-authored *Houses of Missouri, 1870–1940* (2008) and *Hare & Hare, Landscape Architects and City Planners* (2019). She is one of three authors of the upcoming *Buildings of Missouri* (2023). Grove's articles can be found in such publications as *Landscape Journal*, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Nineteenth Century*, and *Journal of the New England Garden History Society*.

### Notes

1. This article, drawn from the book by Carol Grove and Cydney Millstein, *Hare & Hare, Landscape Architects and City Planners*, University of Georgia Press in association with the Library of American Landscape History, 2019, presents only a portion of Sid's history. The book documents the history of the firm, that he formed with his son, S. Herbert Hare (1888-1960) through 1960. Extensive documents and drawings can be found at Hare & Hare Company Records (HHCR) Collection K0206, State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center—Kansas City and in numerous archives across the country.
2. Christopher Hare was born in Louisville and his parents were from Maryland and New Jersey. Isadora Hare was born in Kentucky, as were her parents. The couple would go on to have eight children, six of whom lived to adulthood.
3. William Griffith, *The History of Kansas City, Illustrated in Three Decades* (Kansas City: Hudson-Kimberly Publishing, 1900), 106.
4. Walter P. Tracy, *Kansas City and Its One Hundred Foremost Men* (self-published, 1924); Lee et al., *A Legacy of Design*, xv; Millstein and Novick, National Register Nomination, 34; Deon Wolfenbarger, “Historic Resources Survey of the 1893 Parks and Boulevard System, Kansas City, Missouri,” prepared for the Prairie Gateway Chapter, ASLA, 1989; and William Worley, “Kansas City Architects George Kessler, Henry Wright, and Sid and Herbert Hare,” *Kansas History* 20 (Autumn 1997): 192–205.
5. Sid J. Hare to George Law, December 10, 1904, box 1, HHCR.
6. For more on Shaw's garden see Carol Grove, *Henry Shaw's Victorian Landscapes: The Missouri Botanical Garden and Tower Grove Park*. University of Massachusetts Press in association with the Library of American Landscape History, 2005.
7. Sid J. Hare to William Wright Baldwin, November 24, 1908, box 1, HHCR.
8. Richard J. Gentile, “Upper Carboniferous Crinoids: An Extraordinary Collection by Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Amateur Paleontologists, Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A.,” *Geological Curator* Vol. 7, Nov. 2003: 375.
9. Sid J. Hare Collection, LSC022, The Mary Baker Eddy Library, Boston, MA.
10. See Gentile, “Upper Carboniferous Crinoids: An Extraordinary Collection by Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Amateur Paleontologists, Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A.,” *Geological Curator* Vol. 7, Nov. 2003: 373–80.
11. Aside from the AACS and the ASLA, of which he became a Fellow in 1912, Sid belonged to kindred organizations devoted to the improvement of public landscapes. He was a Senior Fellow in the American Institute of Park Executives and a charter member the American Park and Outdoor Art Association which later became the American Civic Association.
12. Sid J. Hare, “The Influence of Surroundings,” abstracted in *Park and Cemetery*, Vol. VII, No. 7, Sept. 1897, 156-57.
13. R. J. Haight, *AACS Proceedings of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention*, Omaha, Nebraska, 1922.
14. Ibid.
15. “Constitution and Bylaws of the Association of American Cemetery Superintendents,” *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Convention of the Association of the American Cemetery Superintendents* (Chicago: Modern Cemetery Press, 1892), 55.
16. Hare, “The Influence of Surroundings.”
17. In total, Sid Hare and his firm would design (or add substantial grounds to) fifty-four cemeteries in the United States and one in Cartago, Costa Rica (1914). There, at 4,930 feet above sea level, they reshaped the south slope of an earthquake-wrecked volcano, and its demolished catacombs and mausoleums, into a modern cemetery planted with palms, bamboo, and eucalyptus.
18. Sid J. Hare to J. R. Vernon, June 21, 1901, box 1, HHCR.
19. Sid J. Hare to J. R. Vernon, February 28, 1913, *ibid*.
20. Sid J. Hare to family, February 9, 1905, *ibid*.
21. R. N. Kesterson to Sid J. Hare, May 27, 1908, *ibid*.
22. Typed article, June 2, 1908, *ibid*.
23. Sid J. Hare to Kesterson, March 2, 1905, *ibid*.
24. The Ruskinian Gothic residence was designed c. 1880 by the Boston architectural firm of Peabody and Stearns. In 1908, the architect and fellow Christian Scientist Solon S. Beman completed an extensive remodeling of the residence, creating a cozier environment for Eddy while still accommodating her large staff.
25. Dickey, a prolific writer on Christian Science, served on the board of directors of the Mother Church from 1910 until 1925 and coedited Eddy's memoirs.
26. Sid J. Hare to Adam Dickey, June 20, 1910, box 1, HHCR.
27. Church representatives would later choose Sid's firm to design the grounds of the Chestnut Hill Benevolent Association where twenty-five plans on vellum and linen and eight planting plans would guide the project.
28. As described by Frederick Heath, Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma, to Sid J. Hare, November 1, 1910, box 1, HHCR.
29. Sid J. Hare to George Hill, September 15, 1910, *ibid*.
30. By Herbert's death in 1960, the firm had overseen more than four thousand projects in over thirty states, Canada, and Costa Rica.
31. *A Preliminary Report for the Improvement of Point Defiance Park, Tacoma, Washington*, box 1, HHCR.
32. Sid J. Hare to R. J. Haight, May 2, 1914, Box 67, HHCR.
33. “Harecliff,” *Kansas City Post*, July 4, 1926. Harecliff had nearly 9,000 visitors according to Sid's calculations. Many were presented with a souvenir booklet the couple had crafted.
34. “Harecliff,” *Kansas City Post*, July 4, 1926.
35. Sid died on the evening of October 25, 1938.
36. A. D. Taylor to Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Hare, October 26, 1938, box 67, HHCR.



L to r: Anna, Herbert, Julia, and Sarah Field, with her pony, Bonnie, in front of their home, c. 1899. North Andover, Massachusetts. Courtesy of the North Andover Historical Society.

At right: Sarah Moore Field (1885-1988), c. 1904. Photograph by Pach Brothers. Courtesy of the Trustees of Phillips Academy, Abbot Academy Collection, Phillips Academy Archives and Special Collections.



# The Future of the Past:

## CAN WE SAVE THE HISTORY WITHOUT THE HOUSE?

*Susan J. Montgomery*

In the summer of 1994, when I first reported to *Nineteenth Century* readers on the Field-Hodges House in North Andover, Massachusetts, everything was possible for the future of the estate. I was a newly-minted graduate of the American and New England Studies Program at Boston University, hired to evaluate the significance of the collection two years earlier. My sense that the house, especially the first-floor living spaces, had been frozen in time was immediate. They were warm and inviting, spacious and livable, yet on closer look, every shelf, every drawer, every closet, held reminders of the past. Cellophane-wrapped cigars were left in a desk drawer by a man who had died in 1939. High school textbooks used from 1900 to 1904 remained in a parlor bookcase. Dinnerware purchased in 1885 was displayed in the pantry. Upstairs, nineteenth-century drugs and toiletries had evaporated in a medicine cabinet and boxes of sorted papers and clothing filled unused bedrooms. Toys and games played with in 1890 patiently waited for new children in the huge attic.

Three generations of the Field family lived in the 1839 Greek Revival building, from 1874 to 1988.

Sarah Moore Field (1885-1988) was born there, when it belonged to her grandfather, and died there 103 years later. She outlived all her close relatives. She never married, never had to make room for a husband or children, and never left home for long. She was bright, independent, pragmatic, and well educated, an amateur artist and a lifelong patron of art, music and theater. Although trained as a physical therapist, she never practiced. She was very successful in business, building the investments made by her grandfather and father into a modest fortune. Active in her community, she was a careful philanthropist and an avid gardener.

In the fall of 1939, Miss Field's father died, leaving her to live alone for the first time in her life, at the age of fifty-four. She had nursed both of her parents, as well as an aunt who lived nearby, through their final illnesses. Her only sister had died ten years earlier. Sarah became the family historian, the keeper of memories. One spring day in 1941, she carefully wrapped a woolen cape that had belonged to her mother in several pages of the March 23 *Boston Sunday Globe*. She secured the bundle with

cotton twine and in small, neat letters wrote across the newsprint in red pencil, "Long brown Mohair Cape Coat worn by J.M Field about 1885." Over the next forty years, she packed up thousands of personal items that had belonged to her parents and grandparents, to her sister, her nieces, and herself. She saved clothing, jewelry, toys, games and dolls, furniture, financial and legal papers, household records, photographs, correspondence, magazines and memorabilia.<sup>1</sup>

In "A Material Culture Time Capsule," I catalogued their extensive collection of household furnishings, personal belongings, and archival material, detailed evidence of the Field family's 114-year residence.<sup>2</sup> Miss Field hoped her home would become a historic house museum, a community asset, and a testament to her family's success story, from subsistence farm to independent wealth. After her death, her devoted trustee, pastor and friend, the Reverend Herbert I. Schumm, assembled a team of experts to examine that possibility. Experienced local historians, curators, preservationists and educators from prominent institutions, including Historic New England (then the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities), the Peabody-Essex Museum, the North Andover Historical Society, Trustees of Reservations, and Boston University, they considered the options and available resources very closely. In the end, it was determined that opening the Field-Hodges House as a museum was not the wisest choice. The process of arriving at that conclusion and, more importantly, at an innovative solution that honored Miss Field's legacy may provide a model for stewards of other historic sites as they grapple with the impulse to create a new house museum or maintain an existing one under challenging circumstances.

In the case of the Field-Hodges House, preservation of the buildings and grounds was a top priority. Miss Field had made her wishes clear. When she died, she had no living relatives to inherit the estate or take responsibility for its survival. Her Last Will and Testament, executed in 1986, two years before she passed away, was the binding record of her intentions. Family historian that she was, however, she had saved all of her previous wills, including an unexecuted early attempt, plus several



subsequent drafts with corrections in her handwriting, and related correspondence with her attorney. Written over almost twenty years, these documents provided insight into her logic as well as her intense emotional attachment to her home.

As early as 1969, as she was drafting her first will, Miss Field directed her as yet unnamed trustees to ensure the “proper preservation of my home and the grounds around it by actively seeking to convey title to those persons who will preserve such property intact as a home in as nearly the same condition and manner as I have maintained it.”<sup>3</sup> This will was never executed, but it did establish a consistent goal, preservation. At the time, two beloved nieces, Barbara and Polly, were still alive. Although both women had grown up in New Jersey, Miss Field optimistically convinced herself that one of them would return to North Andover to live in the family homestead. But Barbara, then 62 years old, had suffered physical and mental illness all her adult life and was incapable of managing a large estate. Two years younger, Polly was married and had moved to Arizona, seeking relief from debilitating rheumatoid arthritis in the dry climate. Although they loved their Aunt “Sallie”, as she was known to family and close friends, they had no inclination to live in her home. Nevertheless, in 1976, in her first official will, Miss Field left her real estate to Barbara and Polly without restriction.

Within two years, she began to have second thoughts and turned to the North Andover Historical Society (NAHS) with the proposition that she bequeath the property to them. During negotiations, Polly died unexpectedly. In 1980 Miss Field formalized her preservation agreement with NAHS in a new will, stating that it was her hope but not “command” that the property be maintained and “made available to the public for viewing as often as may be reasonably possible.” She provided an endowment and an annual fund for maintenance.<sup>4</sup> Three years later, she altered her will again to stipulate that should the property no longer be suitable for visitation or NAHS was no longer able to manage it as a museum, the property would be transferred to the Trinitarian Congregational Church (TCC), the Field family church for more than 100 years.<sup>5</sup>

Miss Field’s attachment to her church had intensified since the early 1970’s due to personal circumstances as she aged. In 1973, her bedroom caught fire, a frightening experience for any woman in her late 80’s living alone, but also a shocking threat to her beloved home. The fire marked a turning point in her relationship with her pastor, the Reverend Herbert I. Schumm, who literally came to her rescue even before the fire department arrived. From then on, she relied on Schumm to take care of practical details such as repairs and insurance claims. Two years after Polly passed away, Miss Field’s gardener and very close friend collapsed and died in her kitchen. She herself fell and broke her pelvis the following year, required full-time care from then on. All these calamities, combined with a growing loss of trust in her attorney’s management of her estate only drew her closer to Schumm as the one reliable, steady presence in her life. Fully aware of the support of her “church family,” as she called congregation, Miss Field wanted to express her gratitude.

After the death of Barbara Field in 1985, she revised her will for the fourth and final time. Executed in January 1986, this document granted her church the first option to assume trusteeship of the Field-Hodges House, with the North Andover Historical Society named as an alternate should the church not

accept responsibility for overseeing a historic property.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, the \$300,000 endowment stipulated in 1980 was not reviewed and was woefully inadequate. Further complicating the financial situation was the revelation in 1984 that Miss Field’s attorney had reduced her estate by almost half a million dollars. The subsequent malpractice suit dragged on for almost ten years. It was not until late 1993 that the insurance company compensated the estate, paying out only slightly more than half the lost funds. Even with the additional monies, the liquid capital available to endow the preservation of the house was insufficient.<sup>7</sup> Neither Trinitarian nor the North Andover Historical Society could take on permanent responsibility for the Field-Hodges House without bankrupting themselves.

With historic house museum off the table, other ideas were floated: a study center, a modest tearoom, an event space, a wedding venue, perhaps even a Bed & Breakfast. None of these was practical either. It was clear that forcing the Field-Hodges House into any public role would only exhaust the existing financial resources and the estate would end up needing another rescue, without having accomplished anything. A new solution, an alternative to the overly optimistic instinct to freeze a beloved landmark in order to save it, had to be found.

Meanwhile, Herb Schumm provided a direct, personal link to Miss Field. Having worked with her for the last fifteen years of her life, he was in a unique position to voice her opinions. After she died, he continued to supervise the day-to-day administration of her estate, duties she delegated to him as the one “who best knows my desires for my property upon my decease” in her 1986 will. As co-executor of the estate, Schumm eventually oversaw a twelve-year process of physical care of the household furnishings, research on the collection, public programming, and preservation of the house and grounds.

Funding was not the only concern. Although the Field-Hodges House was a fascinating time capsule of family life from 1874 to 1988 for scholars, could a compelling, coherent interpretive plan be developed for the public from the evidence at hand?

The collection was gathered organically, as needed. Miss Field’s grandparents brought some mid-nineteenth-century furniture with them when they retired to what was a country estate in 1874. Their son soon married and he and his wife added another layer in their own taste, with mostly Eastlake style furnishings. As they raised their two daughters, they naturally acquired equipment, toys, books and household goods designed specifically for children. Because she never moved away, Sarah Moore Field’s belongings accumulated all her long life—her high school textbooks, art school drawings and paintings, American Red Cross volunteer records, travel souvenirs, and a wedding dress she never wore. She lived alone for almost fifty years, making her own changes and additions. Consequently, the contents of the house did not represent a single time period or taste. Stylistically, few items were high style or exceptionally high quality. They reflected a conservative, upper-middle-class family that chose to make do, reupholstering the parlor suite, for example, rather than replacing it with something more fashionable, even though they could afford to. Would this collection have enough appeal to attract and satisfy visitors?

Following Miss Field’s death in May 1988, Schumm tasked two of her long-term caretakers to sort the collection into



manageable categories and review her papers to create a chronology of her life and family. Their attention to detail and careful handling resulted in displays of clothing and other personal items for occasional tours of the property. He also oversaw the appraisal of the estate required for the probate process. It was at that point that he assembled the panel of curators and preservationists to consider viable options that would fulfill the intent of Miss Field's will.<sup>8</sup> While acknowledging the challenges that lay ahead, all agreed on the historic value of the estate as a "fascinating time capsule" of nineteenth-century American life.<sup>9</sup>

still in play. Miss Field's last will established a trust for Polly's husband, Robert Dillard, for the rest of his life, so it was not until late 1996, when he passed away, that the estate could finally be resolved. Cash bequests to friends and non-profit institutions listed in Miss Field's will, including her alma maters Abbot Academy (by then part of Phillips Academy) and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and NAHS, were released and the balance of her estate designated as an endowment to provide income for the Trinitarian Congregational Church.

Once that step was concluded, the executors and TCC officials agreed that the best possible fulfillment of Miss Field's intentions



The front parlor of the Field-Hodges House, c. 1940. The sofa and the chair to the right are part of a five-piece suite purchased in 1877. Reupholstered twice since their purchase, the sofa and chair were still in the parlor in 1992. Photograph by Sarah Moore Field. Courtesy of Historic New England.

In late 1992 Schumm hired me to document the historic importance of the collection for research and teaching. I held an on-site seminar on American material culture for Boston University graduate students in the spring of 1993. Each student produced a research paper on one aspect of the collection, including Miss Field's tenure at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and a proposed furnishing plan should the house ever be opened to the public as a museum. They presented their work at an open house for representatives of local colleges, archives, and preservation agencies to expand appreciation of the Field-Hodges House as a regional resource.<sup>10</sup> Their research also helped inform my presentations at the annual meeting of the North Andover Improvement Society in June 1993 and a joint program of the Andover and North Andover Historical Societies three years later, as well as my 1994 article in *Nineteenth Century*.

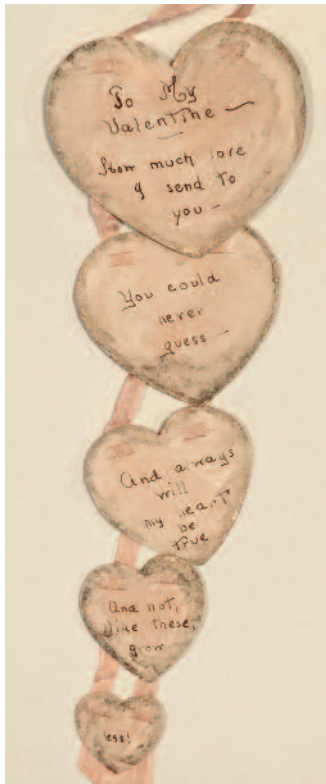
As research on the collection continued, legal restraints were

would be to donate the more historically significant collection items to museums and archives, where they would remain accessible to the public and available for scholarly study. In 1997 I was invited back to the Field-Hodges House to clarify the best course for preserving any rare or valuable items in the spirit of Miss Field's will. I catalogued the collection in a computer database compatible with the North Andover Historical Society's in-house system. I also contacted sixteen regional museums, historical societies, archives, and libraries and worked with their representatives to select pieces that fell within their individual missions and collection policies, pieces that might never have been noticed in a house museum setting.<sup>11</sup> All gifts would be designated the Sarah Moore Field Collection, perpetuating her name.

As the major repository of community history, NAHS received a large collection of archival photographs of the extended Field family, neighborhood architecture and local

events, papers and pamphlets from organizations such as the North Andover Garden Club, the North Andover Chapter of the American Red Cross, and the public schools, receipts and ephemera from businesses, newspaper clippings, legal documents, architectural drawings of the Field-Hodges House alterations, and the personal memorabilia, correspondence and diaries of Sarah Moore Field. In addition, a large lot of twentieth-century greeting cards was singled out to augment the

of the collection proved to be a blessing in disguise for regional institutions and an unexpected recognition for Miss Field. The archives of HNE acquired an extensive collection from the estate, including plant and garden catalogues, periodicals and books, advertisements for household goods and equipment, maps, travel guides and brochures, children's magazines, and photographs of the extended Field family and their properties, especially the house in North Andover. The personal archives of



L to r: Sarah Moore Field (1885-1988), handmade valentine, c. 1909. "Scenes of Village Life in Ye Olden Days," and "The Fallow Field Hunt," lines, Deldare pattern, c. 1902. Buffalo Pottery, Buffalo, New York. Photograph © Randy Sims, 1992. Courtesy Peabody Essex Museum.

specialized collection held by NAHS. Objects donated to the society included housewares, toys, shoes, a handmade birdhouse replica of Trinitarian Congregational Church, the Field family Bible, cookbooks, and medical manuals. This material has since been used extensively for research, school programs, and exhibitions. *Sallie: A North Andover Life*, an exhibit honoring Miss Field's life and home, was on view in 2019.

Martha Larson, then president of NAHS, commended Schumm on the process from a local point of view:

Although it is sad that this magnificent house and collection must be separated and dispersed, I wanted to express to you my appreciation for the thoughtful way in which the task is being undertaken. As I have said before, I heartily agree with the many curators and historians who have described this estate as a rare survival with significance not only for North Andover but for all New England.

The North Andover Historical Society is deeply grateful to be able to add archival material from the house to its collection. It is fitting that such an important part of the town's history will be preserved for future researchers and visitors.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Historic New England concluded that the dispersal

Sarah Moore Field included her notebooks, examinations, correspondence, receipts, textbooks, catalogues, and other memorabilia from the Posse Normal School of Gymnastics and Miss Farmer's School of Cookery.

The HNE collections division also selected a broad range of objects, including household furnishings, kitchenware and appliances, furniture, wallpaper, table linens and other textiles, prints, sculpture, clothing and shoes, toys and sporting equipment, and handmade Christmas decorations. In her acknowledgment of the gift, President Jane C. Nylander noted,

These objects provide a rare opportunity for the research and teaching about New England material culture based on the records of a middle-class North Andover household from the 1860s through the 1940s.<sup>13</sup>

The staff of the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, especially Dean Lahikainen, former Carolyn and Peter Lynch Curator of American Decorative Arts, was steadfast in support of the Field-Hodges House as an Essex County landmark. Lahikainen spearheaded the first meetings of local and regional historians as consultants in 1992 and continued to offer his expertise and advice through the long process of cataloguing Sarah Moore Field's collection. In 1998 the estate donated more





An attic room in the Field-Hodges House, November 1998. Panels and fragments of rare nineteenth-century wallpaper were intact throughout the room. Photograph by David Bohl. Courtesy of Historic New England.

than seventy-five pieces of furniture and household furnishings, including a set of Deldare dinnerware, games, toys and dolls, hats, and clothing to the Peabody Essex. Lahikainen expressed the museum's thanks for the donation to Herb Schumm:

We are pleased to be able to help preserve part of this unique family legacy...I'm sure Miss Field would be pleased with the steps that have been taken, knowing these artifacts will enrich the lives of countless people far into the future.<sup>14</sup>

Two other donations honored the Field family's close ties to towns other than North Andover. Miss Field's grandfather, Jeremiah Smith Field, prospered in nearby Lawrence, Massachusetts for almost thirty years, raising his family and building his business ventures to comfortable wealth. His son, Herbert Webster Field, worked at the Essex Savings Bank in the city from 1870 to 1935, and his granddaughter Anna attended the public schools through high school. Sarah Moore Field preserved a significant collection of Lawrence ephemera including advertising, calendars, timetables, and pamphlets, as well as reports on the public school system, Essex Savings Bank photographs and records, and material relating to the Lawrence Street Congregational Church, all of which was donated to the Lawrence History Center.

The town of Peterborough, New Hampshire was also a key part of Field family history. As the former Peterborough Historical Society, the Monadnock Center for History and Culture selected extended family correspondence, photographs, financial and legal documents, and publications pertaining to the

town and to Twin Rock Farm, the Field family homestead established in 1807.

A collection of nearly one hundred items of clothing and accessories was donated by the Sarah Moore Field estate to the American Textile History Museum in Lowell. This included children's dresses, coats, and hats worn by Sarah Moore Field or Anna Field in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The majority of the women's clothing spanned three generations in the Field household between the 1860s to the 1910s: mourning clothes, dresses, underwear, coats and hats, and specialized outfits such as a riding habit and bathing costume. Exceptions were an even earlier quilted petticoat, an Empire-style sheer white cotton dress with an applied pattern of glitter and sequins, and a lace pelerine or cape that were family heirlooms, as well as an evening ensemble worn by Sarah Moore Field in the 1930s. In selecting these items for acquisition, senior curator Diane Fagan Affleck noted that they

are excellent examples of the period and place in which they were used. The availability of information about the sources of the fabrics, the wearers, and the seamstresses who made the clothes helps immeasurably to put these garments into context. For historians, that context is extremely important as we present exhibitions and objects to our audiences to help them understand how people lived in the past.<sup>15</sup>

The museum included items from the Sarah Moore Field collection in several exhibitions between 1998 and 2009, including *Stylish Hats: 200 Years of Sartorial Sculpture*. When

the American Textile History Museum closed in 2016, its entire collection was dispersed to several institutions, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Henry Ford Museum, Winterthur, and Columbus College of Art and Design.

Sarah Moore Field's school records were surprisingly complete. She graduated from Abbot Academy in Andover in 1904, and the school remained close to her heart for the rest of her life. She saved her class essays, textbooks and notebooks, tuition and book receipts, semester grade reports, official correspondence with school administrators, photographs, publications, and programs for recitals, performances, and services while she attended the academy. She also kept correspondence from classmates, some of whom remained friends for decades, and a large lot of Abbot Academy Club material, including fund-raising efforts and membership activities of alumnae. After Abbot merged with Phillips Academy in 1971, the historical records of both institutions were combined in a single archive. When approached as a potential recipient of Miss Field's keepsakes, Academy Archivist Ruth Quattlebaum responded,

the completeness of the picture they draw of Abbot at the turn of the century is valuable for material culture scholars and current Academy students alike. The newly opened Brace Gender Center on the Abbot campus has inspired an interest in Abbot's history and women's education.<sup>16</sup>

After Abbot, Miss Field attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston from 1904 to 1908, studying with Boston School artists Philip Leslie Hale and Edmund Tarbell. Although she did not pursue an artistic career, she did support the school financially over the next eighty years. In addition to a cash bequest in her will, the estate donated her collection of student drawings, paintings, books, notebooks, sketchbooks, and equipment as well as tuition receipts, correspondence, and school publications to the museum's archives. At the time of the gift, archivist Maureen Melton noted,

Student course work and projects are somewhat undocumented in our Archives. The acquisition of the Field Collection, with its many visual materials, will enhance our understanding of the history of the School.<sup>17</sup>

Other institutions benefitted from Miss Field's estate including the Robert S. Peabody Institute of Archaeology at Phillips Academy which was given her memorabilia from a 1905 trip across Canada, including Native American tools, railroad travel guides, and a large lot of tourist postcards of Yellowstone National Park. This gift also included the Northern Plains Indian child-size moccasins sent to her by a friend in 1905, a pottery bowl from the San Ildefonso or San Juan pueblo in New Mexico, and a large lot of Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, and Micmac baskets from New England.

A theater and music lover all her life, Miss Field saved programs for performances she attended in the Boston area and in New York between 1901 and 1953. In 1998, nearly three hundred programs, representing a wide range of dramas, comedies, musicals, operas, and symphonies, were given to the Archives and Special Collections of Emerson College. The gift

also included libretti of Sarah Bernhardt performances and Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience*, and photographs of the German actor Frank Reicher, who was a family friend. Emerson digitized all of the programs and made them publicly accessible online at [www.sscommons.org](http://www.sscommons.org).

Three generations of the Field family were interred at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, starting in 1849. A large collection of documents relating to their graves was donated to the cemetery's archive, including receipts for the purchase and perpetual care, records of funeral costs and burials, designs for headstones, correspondence regarding the burials, and photographs of the graves. Meg L. Winslow, Curator of Historical Collections, responded to the gift,

We are just delighted by the comprehensive and personal story that is told through these records...we are thankful to Miss Field for taking such good care of her family's history. It is remarkable.<sup>18</sup>

Of related interest is an 1852 three-piece gilt-brass candelabra featuring the Bigelow Chapel at Mount Auburn donated to HNE.



A set of gilt-brass and crystal girandoles, featuring the Bigelow Chapel at Mount Auburn, c. 1852. Courtesy of Historic New England.

In October 1998 the remaining collection of Sarah Moore Field's estate was sold in a public auction. Almost 350 lots of family belongings from document boxes to Windsor chairs, ladies' dresses, undergarments, hats, purses and furs, dolls, toys and games, china, candlesticks and silver flatware, table linens and household goods were sold in a single day. Over \$100,000 was raised to benefit Trinitarian Congregational Church.

Historic New England unflinchingly supported efforts to fulfill Miss Field's intention to preserve the Field-Hodges House. As early as the spring of 1996 Brian Pfeiffer, Vice-President, Conservation and Preservation Services, recommended that preservation restrictions be attached to the deed before the sale of the house.<sup>19</sup> Three years later Historic New England sponsored a public program called "Reading Your Old House."<sup>20</sup> HNE provided more than a dozen experts in historic collections, research, preservation, stewardship, architecture, and



landscapes as speakers and workshop leaders, using the Field-Hodges House as a case study. In February 2000 the Field-Hodges House was officially accepted in Historic New England's Preservation Easement Program with legally binding restrictions on certain architectural features of the property and an endowment from the estate that enabled HNE to monitor those restrictions in perpetuity.<sup>21</sup> The exterior appearance of the house, barn, and fences was protected, as were many interior finishes such as faux graining and plaster ceiling medallions, all documented in photographs, before the house was put on the market. Specifically mentioned were two attic rooms where fragments of much earlier wallpapers were collaged, including a rare columns pattern that originally hung in the front hall.<sup>22</sup> Recognizing that the house would become a private home, HNE imposed no restrictions on paint and wallpaper in the living spaces, electrical work, insulation, and the modernization of the kitchen and bathrooms.

In February 2000 Donald and Susan Elliott purchased the Field-Hodges House and transformed its empty rooms into a gracious family home. Respecting historic details, they refreshed the interior with new paint, wallpaper, and window treatments sympathetic to the Greek Revival architecture, refurbished bathrooms, and installed a luxurious modern kitchen. They diligently maintained the exterior of the house and the wisteria continued to bloom every May under their care. Restored as a local landmark, the property sold to a second owner in December 2020. The future of the Field-Hodges House looks bright, a fitting legacy to those who cherished it for almost 150 years and to all the stewards who worked so hard to ensure its survival.

Once the Field-Hodges House was safely preserved, the archival material secured, important items of the collection accessioned by regional institutions, and a major monetary gift

transferred to the Trinitarian Congregational Church, only one element of the project remained: the history itself. Although it has taken longer than expected, I wrote the story of the Hodges and Field families' lives in their house, a narrative that would have been very difficult to tell in a historic house museum. *Wisteria House: Life in a New England Home, 1839-2000* was published by Roman & Littlefield in February 2022. I relied heavily on the evidence I found in the house—the photographs and letters, account books, furnishings, clothing, mementoes and personal belongings—that can tell their story, if only we listen carefully enough. This attempt to bring the time capsule to life is my interpretation, based on my experience and training. Perhaps more importantly, it provides links for future scholars to reexamine the same evidence from their own points of view. Historic houses do not need to become museums in order to preserve memories. Historic New England Curator Emeritus Richard C. Nylander said it best when he wrote, “there *are* ways to preserve history without creating a new museum. All you need are a couple of dedicated individuals, some institutions with parallel interests, and plenty of time of figure things out.”<sup>23</sup>



**Susan J. Montgomery** was hired in 1992 as a consultant to evaluate the extensive collections of the Field-Hodges House. She was closely involved with efforts to preserve the house and grounds, catalogue the collections, and oversee donations of key items to historical societies and museums. Her book, *Wisteria House: Life in a New England Home, 1839-2000* was published in 2022. As an independent scholar, she curated exhibitions at the Addison Gallery of American Art, the Hood Museum of Art, the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art at St. Petersburg College, and the Henry B. Plant Museum. Her current independent project is a monograph with coauthor Marilee B. Meyer on the life and work of Arthur E. Baggs and the Marblehead Pottery. She lives with her husband on the coast of Maine.

### Notes

1. Susan J. Montgomery, *Wisteria House: Life in a New England Home, 1839-2000* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), 3. Reprinted by permission of Rowman & Littlefield.
2. Susan J. Montgomery, “A Material Culture Time Capsule,” *Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 14 No. 2. (1994): 10-15.
3. Draft Will Henry H. Gove for Sarah Moore Field, c. February 14, 1969. NAHS.
4. Last Will and Testament of Sarah M. Field, October 28, 1980. NAHS.
5. Last Will and Testament of Sarah M. Field, October 19, 1980. NAHS.
6. Last Will and Testament of Sarah M. Field, January 2, 1986. NAHS.
7. Correspondence and legal documents re Field v. Gove, 1984-1993. NAHS.
8. Preservation architect Allen Charles Hill, A.I.A., was consulted in August 1987. The ad hoc committee consisted of Dean Lahikainen, then Director of Museums, Essex Institute, Salem, Mass., Richard Nylander, then Chief Curator, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Boston; Martha Larson, then Curator, Stevens-Coolidge House, Trustees of Reservations, North Andover; and Carol Machado, then Director, North Andover Historical Society. Herbert I. Schumm, “Report on Services Rendered to the Sarah Moore Field Estate, May 1988 to February 2000,” typescript. NAHS.
9. Dean Lahikainen to HIS, June 24, 1991. NAHS.
10. The graduate students enrolled in my material culture seminar were Peter A. Gittelman, Nancy B. Gruskin, Laura K. Johnson, Grayson Harris Lane, Karen Andrews Parker, Sloane S. Stephens, Gino F. Verzone, and Cassandra L. Walker.
11. These institutions were North Andover Historical Society, Stevens Memorial Library, and Trinitarian Congregational Church, North Andover; Andover Historical Society, Robert S. Peabody Institute of Archaeology, and Phillips Academy Archives, Andover; Lawrence History Center, Lawrence; Museum of American Textile History, Lowell; Peabody Essex Museum, Salem; Historic New England, Emerson College Archives and Special Collection, Museum Archives, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Samuel Crocker Lawrence Library of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston; Mount Auburn Cemetery Archive, Cambridge; Monadnock Center for History and Culture, Peterborough, New Hampshire; and Strawberry Banke Museum, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.
12. Martha Larson, President, North Andover Historical Society, to Herb Schumm, November 13, 1997. NAHS.
13. Jane C. Nylander to HIS, September 30, 1998. NAHS.
14. Dean Lahikainen to HIS, August 7, 1998. NAHS.
15. Diane Fagan Affleck to HIS, November 13, 1997. NAHS.
16. Ruth Quattlebaum to HIS, October 30, 1997. NAHS.
17. Meg L. Winslow to the author, July 13, 1998. NAHS.
18. Brian Pfeiffer to co-executors Herbert Schumm and Peter Waystack, October 24, 1997. NAHS.
19. “Reading Your Old House” was held at the Field-Hodges House on April 17, 1999.
20. Preservation Restriction Agreement granted to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities by Herbert Schumm and Peter Waystack, executors of the estate of Sarah M. Field, in perpetuity, February 14, 2001.
21. Richard Nylander to author, March 25 and April 3, 2019.
22. Richard Nylander, quoted in “When a Museum Is Not a Possibility,” *S.P.N.E.A.*, ser. 73 (Winter 1998-99): 2.

# Preservation Diary

## The Restoration of the Belmont Chapel, Newport

*Pamela Kelley*

The Belmont Chapel is located in the middle of a cemetery in Newport, Rhode Island. The chapel, built in 1887 by August Belmont (1813-1890), a New York financier and his wife Caroline Slidell Belmont (1829-1892), commemorated their daughter Jane Pauline (1856-1875), who died at a young age. The Belmonts were early summer residents in Newport whose great wealth and high social standing helped shape Newport as a summer destination for their society friends. The Island Cemetery was laid out in 1848 as a private memorial garden cemetery, which were coming into vogue at that time, and plots were sold to the wealthy and influential people of Newport. After its completion in 1888, the Belmont Chapel was gifted to the Island Cemetery for use as a non-denominational funeral chapel, available for all.

Ivy and wisteria vines, planted around the building as a decorative element soon after it was built, became the building's downfall in later years, completely engulfing the chapel by the 1970's. Vandals used the building for target practice and animals found a home in the tower to further the destruction.

By 2014, the chapel roof was in imminent danger of collapsing. Harry Eudenbach, who had been keeping an eye on the chapel over the years, decided to uncover the building,

restoration efforts.

The chapel was designed in the style of H.H. Richardson by George Champlin Mason & Son with heavy walls, rough-faced stone, rounded arches and a massive tower. The exterior is of a rich, warm, reddish-brown sandstone, rock faced and random squared with a slate roof. In constructing the chapel, no wood was used in any part of the building except for the doors, window frames and roof, which was of double-boarded yellow pine covered in slate, in a conscious effort to minimize maintenance issues.

The interior had been heavily damaged by water and most of the plaster had fallen down over the years. Vestiges of the original decorative painting that surrounded the windows were still visible but fast dissolving. Most of the information on the chapel's construction has been gleaned from contemporary newspaper articles but unfortunately no photographs could be found to help document the interior. The chapel consists of a nave, chancel and clergy robing room in the base of the tower and measures 48' x 112'. The centerpiece of the chancel is a white seven-foot-long altar of Caen stone and marble, designed by George Champlin Mason Jr. supported by life-size kneeling cherubs. There were 2 pews in the chancel and 8 in the nave also



L to r: The Belmont Chapel, c. 1890; covered in ivy and wisteria, c. 1900; prior to removal of vines, 2014. Courtesy The Belmont Chapel Foundation.

patching the holes in the roof. Upon being hired to remove the ivy, landscapers informed him it was difficult to remove ivy from trees, whereupon Harry said, "That's not a tree, that's a building!" To assure himself that the building was stabilized, Harry also had an engineering report prepared to inform future

designed by Mason, Jr. made of solid oak, each having its own bas-relief carving of oak leaves, climbing roses or ivy on the side panels. The floors throughout the building are tiled in a richly patterned and colored tile still in reasonable condition. The robing room walls are decorated in a checkerboard pattern of tan



and gold Minton tiles. The nave is bordered in red tiles with a run of chocolate brown enameled tiles as a top border. In the nave and chancel, the plaster walls were painted a pale green by contemporary accounts and the windows and archway to the chancel embellished with decorative designs of trailing vines and florals. The paint colors and remaining designs have been painstakingly analyzed to assist in recreating the interior as originally designed.

Of particular note are the 10 beautiful stained-glass windows that the Belmont family commissioned as memorials to family members. The four most important windows were designed by Luc-Olivier Merson of Paris and executed by the famous Parisian glass artist, Eugene Oudinot and his successor to the atelier, Felix Gaudin. Merson's artistic style of combining historic motifs with the spiritual was a new aesthetic reminiscent of Renaissance images. The window frames have been recreated of mahogany with iron frames seated in the brickwork. To safeguard the

sadly it was either stolen or destroyed and no photos have been located to document it. To maintain the integrity of the restoration, the windows that have no documentation or insufficient stained-glass remaining are being replaced with diamond muntins and cathedral glass. This replicates the original treatment before the stained-glass windows were commissioned and installed and will also match the glass in the tower windows.

There were issues with the original building's design that became apparent fairly quickly and four years later Mrs. Belmont commissioned Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895) to remedy defects in the construction. His improvements included excavating a cellar, adding a coal-fired heating system and building double interior walls as an air chamber to circulate heat and eliminate the damp, cold air.

In recent years, access to the cellar had been blocked and the entrance sealed. After uncovering the entrance, the chapel floor



The interior of the Belmont Chapel, prior to restoration. Courtesy of The Belmont Chapel Foundation.

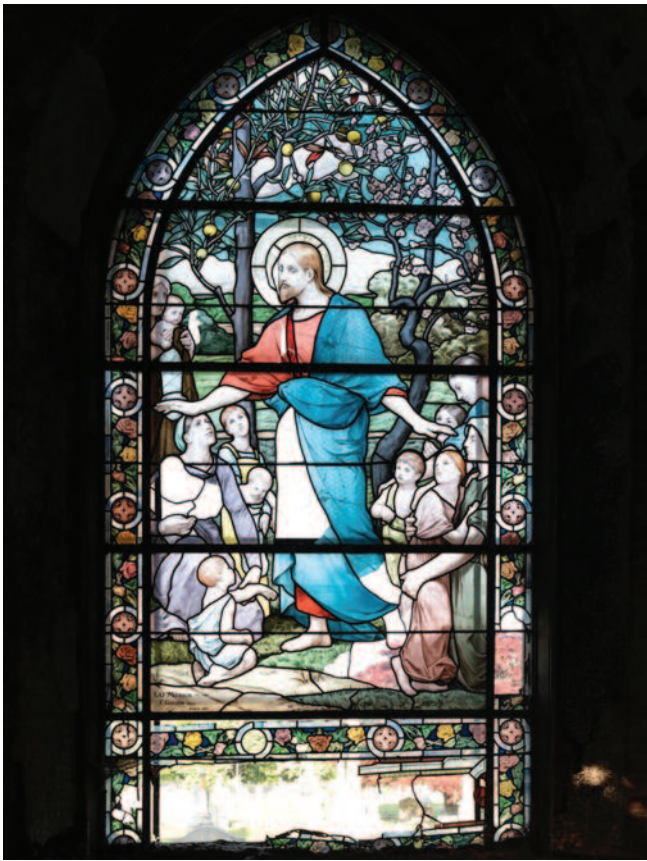
stained glass in the future, protective storm windows with lighting will be installed.

One of the windows, entitled *St. Elizabeth of Hungary* was designed and executed by Tiffany, a Belmont family relation, but

of concrete and Neuchatel Asphalt on vaulted bricks and iron I-beams was able to be reinforced and the HVAC system installed, following the original pathways of Hunt's heating ducts.

The chapel occupies a prominent position in the center of the





L to r: Luc-Olivier Merson, Eugene Oudinot, *Christ Blessing Children*, as seen in the nave of the chapel. Mahogany window frames were installed during the interior restoration. Courtesy of The Belmont Chapel Foundation.

cemetery, but due to its camouflage of ivy, few were even aware of its existence. This changed in 2018 when a local art group asked to use the chapel for an exhibition of Polish artist Piotr Uklanski's paintings that blended well with the haunted aesthetic of the derelict building. The exhibition brought people to the chapel and the cemetery for the first time and sparked interest in a restoration project of the chapel.

In 2019 the Executive Director and myself, President of Island Cemetery, decided to apply for some grants from local foundations to restore the chapel, beginning with the roof, as this was clearly the priority, and at \$600,000, a large expenditure. The Alletta Morris McBean Charitable Trust generously agreed to fund the project. In Newport we are fortunate to have excellent experienced workmen with the skills to do careful, historic restoration. We were fortunate, as well, to engage the services of an excellent general contractor, John Damon.

We attracted the interest of an individual who provided us with a large matching grant to help get a capital campaign underway. A fund-raising consultant helped us develop strategies needed to make the fund raising successful, creating a potential donor database and developing publicity materials. We formed a Capital Campaign Committee and a separate Building Committee, inviting several individuals with talent and influence to assist us.

Meanwhile, Harry worked with the general contractor to get tight, reliable quotes for the work needed and determined the overall budget for the capital campaign. The total needed to

complete the project was \$2.5 million which includes \$500,000 to be used as an endowment fund to assure continuing care of the building. With a track record of keeping on budget and on schedule, we secured a grant of an additional \$600,000 the following year from another generous Newport family trust, the van Beuren Charitable Foundation, to complete much of the interior.

For the purposes of fundraising and managing the project, we divided the project into three phases:

Phase I included replacing the roof, repointing the exterior, excavating the cellar and installing electricity, all of which was completed in March 2022. The work of restoring the stained-glass windows was begun in parallel with Serpentino Stained and Lead Glass Restorers removing the panels to their studio in Massachusetts. The work on the windows is ongoing as the workmen are artists committed to this project and are doing a painstaking restoration.

Phase II includes restoring the interior, replastering the walls, additional repointing of bricks, framing the windows, obtaining an analysis of the paint and decorative details and restoration of the entrance doors and gate. This work is targeted to be completed by early 2023. To date, the walls have been replastered and repointed and the paint and décor analyzed.

Phase III will include applying the decorative painting, repairing the mosaic floor, installing lighting and audiovisual equipment and reinstalling the completed stained-glass windows and protective exterior glass, by Fall of 2023.





We have been fortunate to be able to open the chapel occasionally for open houses, to invite the community to see the progress as well as hold special events as work permits. Accordingly, we are hoping to close the Capital Campaign in the spring of 2023, having raised the full amount.

In spite of the building's condition, the Island Cemetery and the abutting Common Burying-Ground were jointly placed on the Historic Register of Historic Places in 1974, acknowledging:

Newport's Common Burying-Ground and Island Cemetery present this nation's social and artistic development in microcosm. They contain not only the graves of our political, religious and commercial leaders but also, sailors, shopkeepers, farmers and the slaves. As a resting place for everyman and any man, the two cemeteries reflect Roger William's concept of brotherhood.

When completed, the chapel will again serve as a mortuary chapel for those to be interred or memorialized in the Island Cemetery as well as serve the general community for educational tours of the cemeteries that surround it and small gatherings for music and lectures. The chapel restoration has also renewed interest in the cemetery itself which has also been neglected over the years. We are now turning to the restoration of the cemetery grounds and the handsome cemetery administration building that was built in 1902. The Island Cemetery is open to the public during daylight hours.

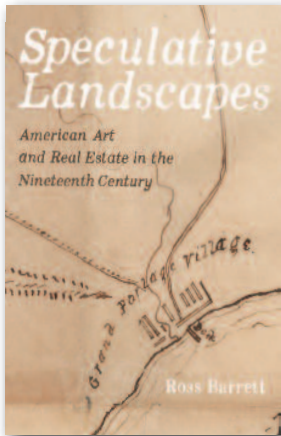


**Pamela Kelley** lives in Newport, RI and is the President of the Island Cemetery where the Belmont Chapel is located. She was first introduced to restoration in 1980 when she and her husband moved and restored a 1780 home in Newport. Most recently, she has been focused on raising funding to restore the August Belmont Memorial Chapel.



Clockwise, from top: original floor tiles as seen during restoration; detail of decorative carving on the Chapel's benches, designed by George Champlin Mason, Jr.; the interior restoration in progress. Courtesy of The Belmont Chapel Foundation.

# The Bibliophile



## *Speculative Landscapes: American Art and Real Estate in the Nineteenth Century*

Ross Barrett.  
University of California Press, 2022.

The use of the word “speculative” in the title of Barrett’s book is wonderfully apt because the volume not only addresses how five painters—Daniel Huntington, John Quidor, Eastman Johnson, Martin Johnson Heade, and Winslow Homer—speculated in

real estate but also speculated artistically through the language of landscape painting on the American capitalist real-estate enterprise during the nineteenth century. In chapters on each artist, Barrett—associate professor of American art and visual culture in Boston University’s Department of Art and Architecture—also speculates, tying together context, previous scholarship, documentation, eco-criticism, exclusion and inclusion, and micro-analyses of works of art, creating logical arcs that guide the reader into multivalences (a quality of having many values and meanings). He reveals that when grappling with land acquisition and development, the artists often pivoted from visualizations of real estate promotion to images expressive of their disenchantment with and disavowal of the mechanisms and impact of such speculations, in results such as “bankruptcy, vagrancy, permanent dependency” and environmental harm. Avoiding the pitfalls of judgment, Barrett does not flinch from addressing such subtleties, contradictions, and implications. His hope is to “establish academic painting’s importance as a cultural auditor of the real estate economy and to shed light on the medium’s capacity for incisive material critique.” He fully accomplishes these aims. His book is a model of how art and its analysis can unlock cultural complexities that are otherwise missed in the annals of history, while also shedding light on the “speculative dynamics and sociohistorical foundations of the contemporary real-estate economy.”

Whereas other sources have often viewed artists’ real-estate dealings as separate from their art, Barrett parses their integral and often entangled relationships. He presents a roughly chronological picture of the reach and impact of real estate phenomena in the work of the five artists. He begins each chapter by chronicling the artist’s real-estate ventures and addressing their impact and manifestations before broadening his discussions to situate the painter’s work in context by close readings. In his first chapter, he explores how Huntington contended with the suburban land boom in the Hudson Valley of the Jacksonian era, in which “land-looking” was practiced by speculators to divine countryside indications of potential wealth. He argues that Huntington broached this idea in his genre painting *Mercy’s Dream*, 1841 (Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts), in the process discrediting determinations of real estate value through spiritual apprehension. In the next chapter, he moves to the Illinois frontier, where Quidor explored speculations on western properties

that occurred after the Jacksonian land bubble burst. He deftly analyzes Quidor’s depiction of a scene from Washington Irving’s *The Money Diggers*, 1832 (Brooklyn Museum), seeing it as an image that recasts farmscapes of rural beauty in works by artists such as Ralph Earl and Charles Willson Peale into a wasteland image that upends the “ubiquitous symbol of fertile soil” that “land marketers employed to signify the solid worth of their ventures and bolster the confidence of their customers.” In his chapter on Johnson, Barrett takes up the mid-century land-boom that led to resort development geared to seasonal tourism. He forms a new interpretation of Johnson’s *The Cranberry Harvest: Island of Nantucket*, 1880 (Timken Museum of Art, San Diego), perceiving it as a manifestation of the “broader economic forces...that pressured the cranberry industry and its workforce,” covering topics including “enclosure and development, speculative abstraction, and Nantucket’s deep-rooted culture of financial adventurism.”

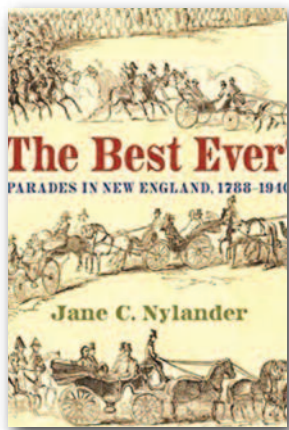
In a chapter titled “Perilous Prospects: Speculation and Landscape Painting in Florida,” Barrett again addresses resort life in an explanation of *On the San Sebastian River, Florida*, c. 1886–1888 (Museum of Arts & Sciences, Daytona, Florida), an uncommissioned work Heade created after moving to St. Augustine in 1883. Barrett observes that in it, Heade turned from the “prospect view,” a construct that conveys a landscape’s potential, to a storm-brewing scene expressive of “uncertainty, risk, and peril” and a less than certain future. In his last chapter, Barrett situates Homer’s Prouts Neck, Maine, images amidst the “contradictions and ambiguities that structured promotional imaginings of coastal real estate” at the century’s end.

The book is to be commended for guiding the reader throughout to its subjects and ideological threads with headings, topic sentences, chapter summaries, and conclusions. It is exemplary in its purposeful investigations that, in breaking from standard interpretations, enables readers to see and understand multifaceted aspects of works of art with clarity while opening the door to other new inquiries. As Barrett writes in his “Conclusion”: “more work is needed” to “gain a fuller sense of the property business’s place within the period’s artistic imagination.” Clearly the book will spawn such investigations while demonstrating a brilliant methodology for doing so.

*Reviewed by Lisa N. Peters*

**Lisa N. Peters, PhD**, is an independent scholar specializing in American art. She is the author of the John Henry Twachtman Catalogue Raisonné ([jhtwachtman.org](http://jhtwachtman.org)). She is currently working on a book on independently conceived allegorical paintings by nineteenth-century American women artists and curating an exhibition of the work of Mary Macomber, to be held at the Fall River Historical Society, Massachusetts (Fall 2024).





## *The Best Ever!: Parades in New England, 1788-1940*

Jane C. Nylander

Old Sturbridge Village and Bauhan Publishing, 2021.

Trumpet fanfare, if you please! Announcing the arrival of an engaging pictorial cavalcade documenting the history of parades in the northeast. Jane

Nylander, our Grand Marshal on this occasion, is well known to students of nineteenth-century New England domestic life and design. During her long and distinguished museum career, she has penned numerous essential references. Here again she draws upon emblematic images and artifacts to explain the interconnectedness of visual culture, ritual, and society in the land of Yankees.

Nylander examines this form of “street” expression over a 150-year period. She discusses ideas, events, and individuals mostly celebrated, although sometimes ridiculed, through marches mounted from Maine to Connecticut. She finds that via parades, New Englanders strengthened community ties, honored the living and the dead, demonstrated military readiness, signaled political and other affiliations, offered instruction as well as entertainment, communicated civic and ethnic pride, and advertised local trades and businesses. She points out who was allowed to join in, who was relegated to the sidelines, and the implications of all.

More than 300 examples of archival photographs, newspaper and magazine illustrations, sheet music covers, and original sketches as well as banners, badges, and other regalia are featured. Nylander investigated public and private collections over a sixteen-year period to assemble images and information.

Visuals dominate the publication. The format of the book is similar to that of a gallery exhibition, with images and accompanying text taking center stage. The images, reproduced with care, are grouped into thematic chapters within a broadly chronological framework. Nylander’s supporting commentary possesses a conversational, personal tone.

The travel and transportation theme of this issue of *Nineteenth Century* provides a useful entry point when plumbing the book’s wide-ranging contents. Special sections are devoted to historical vehicles, public transportation, railroads, and automobiles, with related material found elsewhere. Take, for instance, the two-page spread from *Gleason’s Pictorial Drawing Room Companion* showing a huge parade, part of Boston’s Railroad Jubilee of 1851, winding into near infinity. An illustration from *Harper’s Weekly* represents another type of travel promenade, namely the floral parades put on by the nomadic rich to mark the end of summer in resort towns. In this 1886 graphic, fashionable women drive horse-pulled phaetons decorated with flowers and greenery through Lenox, Massachusetts. As for photographs of individual parade entries, don’t miss the float honoring Jacques Cartier’s *Grande Hermine*—which “sailed” through the streets of Lewiston, Maine, as part of the Grande Fête de St.-Jean Baptiste in 1897—or the eleven-foot-high “Giant Tricycle” promoting Vim Cycle Tires in

Concord, New Hampshire, about the same time.

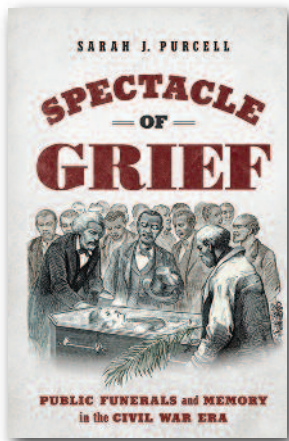
Among the most curious within the genre as a whole are the “Antiques and Horribles” parades, a regional folk custom dating to the 1830s. These raucous, satirical processions were commonly unleashed early on the Fourth of July as a counterpoint to the dignified proceedings taking place later in the day. In these mobile blowouts, white, working-class men and boys in costume mocked those at the fringes of power as well as elected leaders. The former included African Americans and women, neither of whom were allowed to participate fully in New England parades during the nineteenth century. (Typically, African Americans were only permitted to serve as coachmen and attendants. Females rarely marched, although sometimes dressed as historical or allegorical figures on floats.)

While there is much to recommend this vivid survey, a paucity of citations lessens its value to researchers. The nearly 400-page book contains only 10 endnotes. Descriptive details drawn from contemporary accounts are rarely linked to original sources, either formally or informally. Endnotes might have been handled in a manner similar to the image caption credits which are organized by page number and appear in the back. On the plus side, extensive bibliographies of primary and secondary sources are included.

*The Best Ever!* also happens to be “The First Ever!” No comparable, full-length treatment of the topic exists, yet another reason to salute the volume. Nylander’s deep attachment to the tradition of parading, and to New England, is evident in this lovingly constructed, abundantly illustrated contribution.

*Reviewed by Kathleen Eagen Johnson*

**Kathleen Eagen Johnson** is an independent curator, museum consultant, and writer with specialties in historic properties, decorative arts, and New York history. Kate was formerly the Curator and Director of Collections at Historic Hudson Valley. Her list of publications includes *The Hudson-Fulton Celebration: New York’s River Festival of 1909* and *The Making of a Metropolis*. She is the book review editor of *Nineteenth Century*.



## *Spectacle of Grief: Public Funerals and Memory in the Civil War Era*

Sarah J. Purcell.

The University of North Carolina Press, 2022.

Public grief is almost part of our daily lives. Whether the subject is Queen Elizabeth II or George Floyd or the school children of Uvalde, Texas, we watch

mourning displays as a way to understand the complex circumstances of their lives and the social and political meanings of their deaths. Thus, Sarah Purcell's study, *Spectacle of Grief: Public Funerals and Memory in the Civil War Era*, helps us realize the meanings embedded in the mourning rituals that surrounded nine persons who were well known for their involvement with slavery, secession, and the Civil War.

As usual, history publishing involves lots of words and not so many pictures. Those who would like to have seen a demonstration of the author's ideas played out in objects as well as engravings and newspaper illustrations will be disappointed. The death of Elmer Ellsworth, for example, could have been illustrated by the bar pitcher made by Trenton's Millington, Astbury, and Poulson pottery rather than by the Currier & Ives print of "the scene." Though artifacts are largely missing from this study, processions and displays are described from newspaper accounts. These ranged from simple flowers, flags, and blood-stained relics of the deceased (Ellsworth) to a humble mail boat made elegantly mournful by the addition of black cloth draped upon it and the large canopy on deck that protected the remains enclosed in a metallic burial case within a mahogany coffin as it steamed down the Ohio River (Clay).

Purcell chose eight prominent men and one woman in order to explore the origins and aftermath of the Civil War and especially to imagine how the extensive mourning of each gave Americans the opportunity to redefine national identities. Each subject is meant to represent significant aspects of this history by their lives, but Purcell expands this interpretation by demonstrating how the living used their public mourning rituals to further larger political or social agendas.

Her evidence includes newspaper and magazine articles, texts of eulogies, engraved prints and illustrations, and descriptions of the rituals organized for each subject. Many of these corpses were carried over long distances on railroads and highways and down rivers in order to engage mourners in faraway locations. All of this moving around allowed citizens in different parts of the country to participate in the mourning process through ceremonies staged to explain the partisan political importance of these well known persons. Purcell demonstrates through editorial evidence that, as these funerals progressed through the century, they contributed to shifting concepts of American identity, from secession to union.

She begins with Henry Clay (died 1852), the Great Compromiser, and ends with Winnie Davis (died 1894), "Daughter of the Confederacy." In between she tackles the rest in pairs: Elmer Ellsworth and Stonewall Jackson, George Peabody and Robert E. Lee, and Charles Sumner and Joseph E. Johnston. Frederick

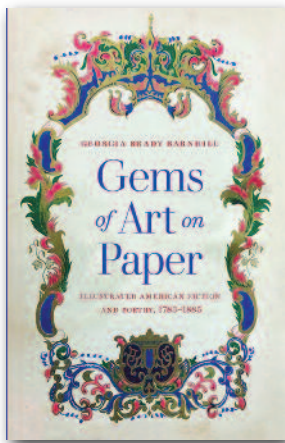
Douglass (died 1895) is paired with Winnie Davis as representing the last debates of the nineteenth century on the Civil War and Reconstruction, which have continued in spirit to the present. For example, Winnie Davis's identity as the Daughter of the Confederacy led to the founding, upon her death, of the United Daughters of the Confederacy as an organization devoted to the Lost Cause. (Historical note beyond this book: UDC headquarters in Richmond, Virginia, was damaged by fire during protests surrounding the death of George Floyd in May 2020.) In a similar vein, Douglass's death spurred legislative debates over whether the life of a black man should be celebrated in the same way as that of a white man. The arguments stressed the fragile bonds between black and white legislators in some state houses as they were called upon for proclamations.

The value of this text is demonstrated in the whispers that persist in American society in the aftermath of slavery, secession, and Reconstruction. There are many lessons here as we contemplate the powerful moments of significant lives whose memories have prevailed through generations. At the same time, Purcell gives us a framework for understanding the uses of public mourning rituals today, whether secession is part of the equation or not.

*Reviewed by Ellen Paul Denker*

**Ellen Paul Denker** is a consulting curator based in western North Carolina. She has published extensively on various aspects of American decorative arts, including furnishings plans for homes of notable nineteenth-century Americans.





## *Gems of Art on Paper: Illustrated American Fiction and Poetry, 1785-1885*

Georgia Brady Barnhill.

University of Massachusetts Press, 2021.

Georgia Brady Barnhill, a veteran of four decades of curatorial posts at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts, pored through

far-flung archives and esoteric and bestselling books in pursuit of this volume's scholarly gems. She documents a century of printers' progress and errors, with broad implications for the history of literacy, politics, and gender roles.

The field of illustration history has been relatively neglected, despite a flurry of recent publications and symposia. She explains in the introduction: the topic has long fallen into "a chasm between literary and art history." She then serves a buffet of anecdotes about publishers' experimentations, struggling to adapt paintings and sketches for products that would persuade bookworms to splurge.

Barnhill lucidly explains changing technologies, as Americans imported European trends and inventions and tested market interest in images beyond the realm of authors' portraits on frontispieces. Some reproduction formats had staying power, such as woodcuts, engravings on wood and metal, mezzotints, photographs, etchings, lithographs, and chromolithographs. (Sadly, none of this book's 76 illustrations are in color.) Fads meanwhile came and went for heliotypes and cliché verre, processes involving light-sensitive substrates that are cousins of photography.

Artworks by celebrated figures such as Jasper Cropsey, Thomas Cole, and William Sidney Mount were adapted into illustrations and recycled for various texts, even if the plots had nothing to do with the pictures. Publishers would reuse, for instance, the engraver John Cheney's 1836 rendition of the painter Thomas Sully's 1833 oil portrait of the actress Fanny Kemble—the delicately crosshatched image was lauded as "a splendid demonstration of the beautiful union of the graphic arts, as they flourish on our side of the Atlantic."

Authors at times had little control over illustrator choices. Mark Twain, for example, insisted that *The Gilded Age* assignment be granted entirely to the German-born Thomas Nast, but Nast turned down the offer. Longfellow sometimes felt disempowered to the point that he would "fear and tremble" at his publishers' selections of irrelevant illustrations, inserted "wherever there is a blank space." He lamented that "Bad Pictures are so bad." Yet consumers could bear even Bad Pictures. Barnhill has found evidence of investments and royalties totaling tens of thousands of dollars per book, with print runs into the thousands—statistics that would be the mouthwatering envy of many academic presses in our time.

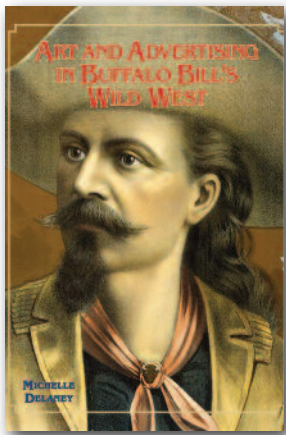
American women were core producers and buyers of illustrated novels and poetry, despite widespread belief that fiction could corrupt and enfeeble an impressionable young female into "a bundle of acutely feeling nerves." Barnhill supplies mini-profiles of trailblazing women, handsomely paid for stoking the public's reading appetite. "There is no arguing with pictures," as Harriet Beecher Stowe pointed out, while working with varied illustrators including

George Cruikshank and the polymath architect-artist Hammatt Billings. The poet Lydia Sigourney provided text for hand-colored lithographs of wildflowers by Clarissa Munger Badger (1806–1889), and among the documented owners of Badger's botanical publications was Emily Dickinson. Anne Lynch Botta (1815–1891), a poet, literary historian, sculptor, suffragist, and Manhattan salon hostess, had her writings illustrated by prominent figures such as Asher B. Durand, and among her friends and fans were Fanny Kemble, Edgar Allan Poe, and Louisa May Alcott. Louisa used quotes from Thoreau, among other authors, in publishing photographs of sketches of Concord literati and their haunts by her sister May. Mary Hallock Foote (1847–1938) earned praise for "catching and holding poetic fancies" in illustrating works by the likes of Longfellow, Nathaniel Hawthorne, James Russell Lowell, and John Greenleaf Whittier; Foote went on to document mining towns in the American West.

I have to admit that I am at the heart of Barnhill's target audience for her findings, since so much of my day is spent researching, writing, lecturing, and curating in the realm of underappreciated Gilded Age women. This book could have been twice as long and twice as pricey (it's 332 pages, \$90 in hardcover, \$32.95 in paperback), and I still would have devoured it. I hope Barnhill's work serves as a springboard for other obsessives like me to explore moments when the Victorian playing field, if we look at it from fresh angles, was leveler than we may think, in allowing under-empowered people a chance to get their own stories in print.

*Reviewed by Eve M. Kahn*

**Eve M. Kahn**, an independent scholar, was the weekly Antiques columnist for *The New York Times* from 2008 to 2016. She contributes regularly to the *Times*, *The Magazine Antiques*, and *Apollo* magazine and serves on the boards of organizations including the Grolier Club and the Victorian Society in America's New York chapter. Among her biography subjects are the nineteenth-century artist Mary Rogers Williams (subject of Kahn's 2019 book from Wesleyan University Press) and the forgotten journalist and reformer Zoe Anderson Norris (1860–1914), subject of her 2023 spring exhibition at the Grolier Club.



## Art and Advertising in Buffalo Bill's Wild West

Michelle Delaney.

University of Oklahoma Press, 2019.

Legendary frontier scout and impresario William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody (1846–1917) enjoyed worldwide fame circa 1900.

Millions of spectators attended

his Wild West Show as it toured the United States and Europe. Many of them believed that the thrilling scenes and performances they had witnessed personified the American West of old.

Without question, Michelle Delaney's volume about the posters and advertisements issued to promote Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show from 1883 to 1913 is a handsome book which represents the most comprehensive and scholarly documentation of this topic yet published. An impressive number of these printed items are documented and many are illustrated, most in full color. Of particular significance is Delaney's drawing on previously inaccessible manuscript and photograph collections for her analysis. For these reasons alone, the volume is an excellent addition to the literature about Buffalo Bill and his influential show.

Still, the book aims to be more than just a reference about Buffalo Bill "paper," as the posters and advertisements were called at the time. In the preface Delaney states that "In presenting the images in this book, I intend to broaden the discussion of the visual culture of Buffalo Bill's Wild West and consider how its production and content, including its symbols and metaphors, can be better understood within the context of a changing nation during the era these materials were created, as well as by examining the propaganda they generated and reflecting on their meaning a century later."

Delaney divides the book into two parts. In "Inventing Buffalo Bill's Wild West," she looks at the development of the art and brand for Buffalo Bill's show. The second part is titled "Visualizing Buffalo Bill's Wild West." Here Delaney considers the visual culture created by artists and printmakers and their influence nationally and internationally. These topics are very well covered in great detail.

However, the work is not really a book that one would want to sit down and read through from beginning to end. There is quite a bit of repetition throughout the text and it is hard to see any arc to the story being told. The chapters and sections are better taken as individual essays on particular aspects of the history of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show paper. The research seems impeccable and the illustrations are gorgeous. The book is impressive indeed, but it is not one to be read so much as to be dipped into or used for research on particular topics or posters.

As a reference, this book is a noteworthy accomplishment, but I must say that as to the larger goals expressed, I find that this work is less successful. While Delaney alludes to other art of the American West, how Buffalo Bill's paper relates to that art receives scant attention. The art of the Wild West Show appeared first in 1883, which is actually quite late in the history of the depiction of the American West in prints and posters, and the author merely mentions this art in passing. For instance, in the decades just before

the Wild West Show, Currier & Ives and other popular print publishers produced an extensive body of influential western images, but its relationship to Buffalo Bill's art is not explored. Though the author says, "The visual imagery created to advertise the Wild West exhibition reflected nearly a century of American western art," how this is so is not discussed.

There are also quite a number of references to contemporary western artists. For instance, Delaney states that "the paintings and works of [Frederic] Remington and [Charles] Schreyvogel provided artistic inspiration for the lithographic artists contracted by Cody and his management team." However, though Delaney points out what good friends Remington and Cody were, how his art, or that of other contemporaries, influenced Buffalo Bill's paper is not really considered or explained.

While I do not find Delaney's most ambitious aims have been achieved, the core of the work is outstanding, and, as a reference on its main topic, I wholeheartedly recommend *Art and Advertising in Buffalo Bill's Wild West*.

*Reviewed by Christopher W. Lane*

**Christopher W. Lane** has worked in the antique print and map world for over 40 years. In 1982, he founded The Philadelphia Print Shop with partner Donald H. Cresswell. In 2010, Lane moved to Denver and opened The Philadelphia Print Shop West, which he ran until it closed in 2022. Aside from curating exhibitions and delivering lectures, he has authored catalogs and other publications, including "Currier and Ives Prints of the American West," which appeared in the Spring 2021 issue of *Imprint*, the journal of the American Historical Print Collectors Society.



# Milestones

## Mining the Miners

Anne-Taylor Cahill

More than just a rush for gold, the Klondike gold rush of the 1880s and 1890s was also a rush for unmitigated freedom for men and women. The gold rush communities did not promote wedded bliss but rather a free-for-all society, in which enterprising women, eschewing Victorian propriety, went into business for themselves. They called it “mining the miners.” Those doing the mining were fondly called Good Time Girls. It was risky, physically. New treatments for syphilis had been developed and some Girls could seek police protection if things got out of hand.

Life in the Far North was not easy. Circle City in the Alaska Territory was considered the Paris of the Far North but its resemblance to Paris was dubious. In a town of mostly men, there were 300 log cabins, 28 saloons, 8 dance halls, a brewery, a library, a barber shop, an opera house and twenty-odd women; primarily Good Time Girls. Despite all the “Parisian” amenities, it was a depressing, primitive place. Prices were outrageous; there was no running water, electricity or sanitary facilities, and no escape for eight months during the winter.

However, there was big money to be made. A dance hall operator averaged \$3,000 a day (\$105,000 today). The George Shaw Dramatic Company raked in reams of cash and gold nuggets. One of the Good Time Girls had brought her bicycle with her but never had the chance to use it, as a miner offered her \$750 (\$26,250) for it. She sold it on the spot. Dance hall girls made money for just a few minutes of dancing with a miner. Dances were \$2 (\$70). Usually these dances went on to broader activities of a horizontal nature. Those fees are not recorded.

All these riches were enticing, but the problem was getting to Alaskan gold rush towns. It was an overland trial by frozen fire. One Girl reported that she walked for miles in mud and knee high water. Another reported that while crossing a lake in a small boat, it capsized and broke in two. She was saved by having a rope tied to her waist and was pulled from the water to safety. Another reported that while walking in deep snow up a mountain nearly 4,000 feet high, her rubber boots caused her to slip backwards. Only by using a pole was she able to drag herself up the mountain. When she finally reached the top, despite the freezing temperature, she was dripping with perspiration. Often snow slides, mud slides, ice slides and flooding put a deadly end to these excursions for the less hardy.

The 1,600 mile route along the Pacific coast to St. Michael, Alaska was easier, but not luxurious. Most of the ships were unsafe, overcrowded and vermin infested. One passenger described them as floating brothels where “all sorts of wild, weird and bestial doings took place 24 hours a day.” It was not unusual to see drunken half-dressed (or even naked) women reeling about the ship’s passages. Some would perform obscene dances on tables while their pimps would pass the hat. One man reported “heaven help the fool who

thought he could watch without paying.”

Once these floating hell-holes docked, the end goal was the town of Dawson. Located on the Yukon River it was the site of the original Klondike gold discovery. By the end of 1898 Dawson had become a city of 30,000—mostly miners. Completely beyond civilizing restraints, vice ruled. Saloons were the only meeting places by day and night. Most of the men were drifters and gamblers, but not all. Some miners became successful businessmen. Many married the Good Time Girls.

One such couple was George Carmack and the aptly-named Marguerite Saftig (aka Laimee, aka LeGrand). Marguerite was a typical Good Time Girl, running a cigar store by day and a lucrative bordello by night, or 24/7 if need be. Marguerite had a reputation for great beauty and charm. By the time she met George she had acquired substantial wealth and prime real estate. Her previous connection to Joseph LeGrand, a denizen of the local underworld, no doubt helped. George Carmack was one of the men who had discovered the original Klondike lode. Starting out life as a drifter, he made lots of money and at 40 decided to become respectable. Marguerite and George met at a “respectable dinner party,” where George proposed at once and 4 months later they were married. The delay was due to a problem with his common-law marriage to an indigenous Tagish woman, Kate Carmack. She filed a divorce suit but this sort of claim was not recognized by the courts. By all accounts, George and Marguerite had a long and happy marriage. The record is silent regarding Kate’s fate.



Kate Rockwell “Klondike Kate,” c. 1900. J. S. Matthews, photographer. Courtesy City of Vancouver Archives.

This scenario was not unusual among the Girls. Many acquired great wealth, retained their beauty and charm and then retired. Some went on to become pillars of their communities, joining churches, founding clubs, donating to charities and even sought political office. In 1920 former Girl Ray Alderman married Fairbanks mayor Thomas Alfred Marquam. A colorful character, Tom was a successful but shady lawyer whose practice was the first choice for prostitutes, gamblers and other sketchy individuals.

The marriage took place so that the mayor would appear to be a “respectable married man,” never mind that they had been enjoying an illicit relationship for two years. Once married, they were respectable enough to host President Warren G. Harding on his visit to the Alaska Territory.

The good times lasted until 1952, when the Federal Government cracked down. In Seward, Alaska, the marshal solved the problem neatly for the Girls: arresting them for prostitution, fining them \$1, thus protecting them from Federal prosecution on the grounds of double jeopardy.

Today, tourists can visit the locations of the Good Time Girls activities as they are now considered places of historic interest!

For further reading:

Ella Lung Martinsen, *Trail to North Star Gold: A True Story of the Alaska-Klondike Gold Rush*. Binford & Mort, 1974.

Lael Morgan, *Good Time Girls of the Alaska-Yukon Gold Rush*. Epicenter Printers, 1998.



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