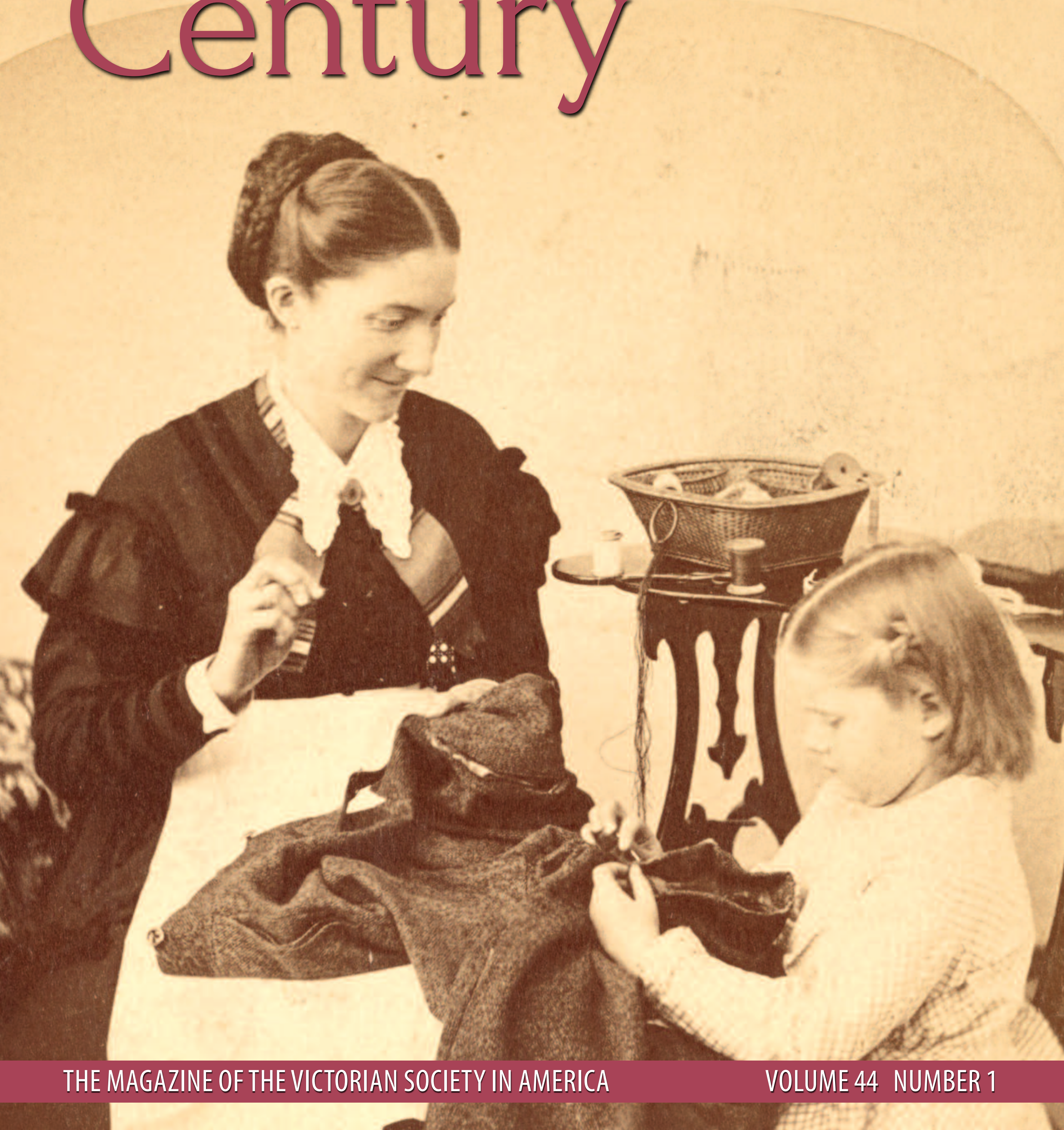
Nineteenth Century



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA VOLUME 44 NUMBER 1

MEMORANDUM

From the desk of Warren Ashworth, editor

While visiting the architect Louis Kahn's sublime Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, this past winter, I happened upon the painting below. This still life is their newest acquisition, painted by Louise Moillon (1609-1696) when she was twenty-one years old. Hers was not a name I knew but the painting is ravishing.

The curator's card notes that she was "among the greatest still life painters of the seventeenth century" and no less than King Charles the First of England (1600-1649) had five of her works in his collection! The card also notes that she stopped painting nine years later when she got married.

This put me in mind of the many women we read about in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who did the same thing. There were innumerable tremendously talented painters, thinkers, scientists, musicians, mathematicians, and writers who were expected to forsake their vocations the moment they were wed. Many of these people found themselves embroidering and tatting their way into oblivion and society's loss is incalculable.

In this issue all five feature articles happen to be by women, four of them about matters central to women in the 1800s and early 1900s. But this is not a special "Women's Edition". It is simply a coincidence. We present them herewith.

Louise Moillon (1609-1696), *Still Life with a Bowl of Strawberries, Basket of Cherries, and Branch of Gooseberries*, 1631. Courtesy of the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.

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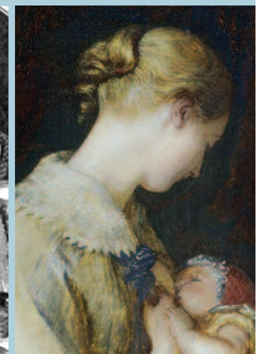
Cover: Mother and daughter sewing, c. 1860. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



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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.

Alice Vanderbilt, as “Electric Light” at the Vanderbilt ball, 1883. Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society.

Sparking Controversy:

THE ELECTRIC DRESS IN GILDED AGE SOCIETY

Priscilla Bright

Silks and satins and jewels galore,
Diamonds and rubies two millions and more,
Perfumes in fountains and wealth in mountains
Flowers in millions to sweeten cotillons,
Crash and flash
And rush and dash
All pleasure, no duty
Grandest of music in parlor and hall,
Half the glory of earth at the Vanderbilt ball

–First verse, *Irish World*[1]

In the early morning hours of March 27, 1883, the Vanderbilt New York fancy dress ball was coming to a close while newspaper reporters from dozens of states were sending in their copy on that exact event. Hundreds of thousands of eyes across the United States devoured the descriptions of fantasy akin to the *Irish World*'s introductory poem above.[2] Contrarily, many were scanning the accounts of grandeur in disgust as they saw poverty plaguing their neighborhoods, their cities, their country. Either fueled by fancy or disdain, they would all eventually come to the description of Alice Claypool Vanderbilt, who "appeared as Electric Light in a white satin trimmed with diamonds and with a magnificent diamond head-dress."[3] The dress is currently housed at the Museum of the City of New York, a mere three miles from where it was first and last worn at 660 Fifth Avenue. The $250,000[4] fancy dress ball was hosted by Alice Vanderbilt's brother-in-law and his wife, Alva and William K. Vanderbilt, in order to launch the new-money family into the prestige of old-money New York.[5] Alice Vanderbilt's Electric Dress acted as both a message in upper-class social politics and a platform for the general public to voice their opinions of fanciful displays of wealth in the Gilded Age.

The gown was made by Charles Fredrick Worth (1825-1895), and although there is only evidence of it being worn once, it was made of the finest materials.[6] The majority of the dress is yellow and golden satin embroidered with metallic threads in the design of lightning bolts. The underskirt is a deep midnight blue velvet that slightly peeks out from under the shimmering tinsel fringe lining the outer skirt. Glass pearls drip down from the neckline framed by the tinsel-filled arm straps. The bodice is lined with silk and features a concealed front closure. Accounts of the ball mention an abundance of diamonds adorning the dress, however today there is no trace of the gems.[7] The most brilliant facet of this dress was Mrs. Vanderbilt's battery-powered electric light, modelled after the Statue of Liberty's torch.[8] At the time of the dress's creation, the Statue of Liberty was not fully assembled, yet Alice Vanderbilt would still have been well acquainted with the monumental torch as the torch itself was displayed in Madison Square Park from 1876 to 1882.[9] Another allure of the electric light was the fact that Thomas Edison had patented his second incandescent lightbulb just three years before the ball.[10] The batteries for this light were hidden away in the dress's folds, which points to the use of Gustave Trouvé's pocket batteries. These miniature power sources were first used for fashion in the mid-1800s to create mechanical movements and glowing gems.[11] This combination of factors created a certain poetic fascination around the beauty of these novel lights.

Alice Claypool Vanderbilt (1845-1934, neé Gwynne) was known to uphold traditional Victorian-era values of being virtuous, responsible, and respectable, and as the wife of the Vanderbilt railroad fortune's heir, she was expected to be as such.[12] She met her husband Cornelius Vanderbilt II (1843-1899) in 1867 while teaching at a Sunday school, and after marrying they had seven children. Tragically, by the time of Alice's death her husband had predeceased her by thirty-five years, one of her children had died in infancy, and three passed in adulthood from various illnesses and incidents.[13] In newspapers, she and her husband were highlighted as "an exceedingly devoted and attached couple."[14] Meanwhile, the individual characterization she received was focused on her modesty and "genial cordial manner."[15] One reporter noted that "although only five feet tall, she had a vigorous and commanding personality," and that "fashion interested her little."[16] Another recounted that at an event hosted by the Vanderbilts in 1884 she was "dressed more plainly," and that in her life she did not make a great display of herself. They even go as far as to say that "she herself would probably be the last person in an assembly of ladies one would naturally select as the wife of the many, many times millionaire."[17] Interestingly, this account was written of Mrs. Vanderbilt exactly a year after she had arrived at her sister-in-law's party fully ablaze in diamonds, gold, and electricity.

The Electric Dress, being a structured and elaborately decorated gown, was a full embodiment of her time's widely accepted fashion. The dress was characterized by its pronounced bustle and trimmed waist. Beyond the shape, the abundance of decoration was also commonplace for the 1880s, both in daytime and evening wear.[18] This fashion's alignment with the status quo is shown by its direct opposition with another trend of the time known as the Aesthetic Movement. This artistic expression entailed loose fitting clothes, puffed sleeves, and a rejection of structural garments such as corsets. Most popular among the middle class and somewhat influencing the lower class, the movement was not met with acceptance, and some following the fashion were "systematically arrested like prostitutes."[19] The movement did not take hold with the American upper class where the wealthiest were making bi-yearly trips to Paris to be fitted for another season's worth of aristocratic outfits and accessories by popular designers such as the House of Worth.[20]

The House of Worth was established in 1858 by Charles Fredrick Worth, an Englishman who became known as the father of haute couture. His business was founded in Paris, continuing the city's long fashion history as it built on the work of Rose Bertin, who used similar themes of elaborate decoration in clothing made for Marie Antoinette less than a century before.[21] Worth also caught the eye of royalty, as Empress Eugénie of France sought out his luxurious dresses to wear in court, thus solidifying his popularity amongst the rich and royal.[22] His designs were just as popular across the Atlantic with those families that would have been invited to the Vanderbilt ball of 1883. These families would regularly buy \$20,000[23] worth of outfits twice a year from Worth and on top of that would also commission wedding dresses and fancy dress costumes for balls.[24] Ultimately, much of the admiration for Worth's work came from his "brilliant insight into customer's personalities and a wonderful logic lay behind his designs," that allowed people to get incredibly personalized wardrobes.[25] These costumes would see an explosion in popularity in the United States after the Vanderbilt ball.

The Victorian fancy dress ball was a new development in the way of extravagant revelry. Costumes ranged from historical and fictional characters to animals, objects and concepts, such as abstract depictions of patience, sour grapes, and the month of November.[26] Its historical predecessor was the masquerade ball that has a long history and was a favorite means of status display for Marie Antoinette. The French Queen set the theme for the parties every Monday and showed up in an extravagant masked costume for each one, including "glittering winter-wonderland attire" for a "Norwegians and Lapps" theme.[27] The Victorian costume ball continued this aspect of extravagance, but where the masquerade ball allowed people to hide their identity and become someone completely new through anonymity, the costumes worn to a fancy dress ball were unmasked and held a unique significance to one's identity.

In *The Victorian Fancy Dress Ball, 1870-1900*, Rebecca Mitchell analyses fancy dress advice books and catalogues of the era to understand the process of choosing a costume. From these come the idea that a person should take into consideration both their physical appearance and personality within their selection of an appropriate costume. One example pulled from Mrs. Talbot Coke's *Hearth and Home* ridicules those who show up as a "florid Helen of Troy, a 'too, too solid' Titania… a skinny Juno and a 'Red Riding Hood' over whose suspiciously golden head some forty summers have passed."[28]

The advice does not say that there is a person who should not dress up, only that the costume should be appropriate to each person. Therefore, the costume that a person chose for one of these balls acted as a document of how they viewed and characterized themselves. In one particular case, *The New York Sun* newspaper used Mr. Abraham S. Hewitt's Vanderbilt ball costume to assess his character in an article about his candidacy for president. He went as King Lear and they saw that to be a tasteful yet extravagant projection of his self-image.[29]

However, not everyone had the luxury to worry about picking the perfect personality-complementing costume to wear to a sparkling dance packed with indulgences. The phrase "The Gilded Age" was coined by Mark Twain and Dudley Warner in their 1873 book of the same name.[30] The satirical book weaves contemporary stories of a financial struggle alongside themes of speculation, exploitation, dishonesty, corruption, and prejudice. The ultimate critique was that the age they were in was not the solid gold that was advertised but rather it was a society riddled with issues that were covered over by a thin sheet of gold–thus, a Gilded Age. During this age technology was rapidly innovating with railroads, steamships, the telephone, the lightbulb, and so on. Alongside this was an uptick in wealth, but the prosperity was not equally enjoyed.[31] Economic inequality and social division were rampant, so while most were working as hard as they could to survive, a select few were enjoying the:[32]

> Prancing horses and dancing plumes,
> Rattle of hoofs in the outside glooms,
> Rush and swirl and the dizzying whirl,
> Till the diamond drops of the chandelier
> And the priceless paintings shake with fear
> Vessels of gold, laces of old
> The richest of dishes known to the wishes
> The wealth of the world in the parlor and hall,
> And feasts for the gods at the Vanderbilt ball."
> –Second verse, *Irish World*[33]

The worries and social politics of elite families in Gilded Age America are apparent in the social context of the Electric Dress. The Vanderbilts made their money off the railroad industry, and it was Alice Vanderbilt's grandfather-in-law, Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794-1877), known as "The Commodore," who began the family business. By the time the family's wealth reached Cornelius Vanderbilt II and his siblings, it had amassed to \$200 million.[34] This wealth, however, did not equate to social status and the family were still considered new money by old New York society. It was not until Alva Vanderbilt's efforts that the family began to enter the coveted social rank of old money families and her most successful move was hosting the 1883 fancy dress ball. It was specifically planned to draw out the clenched hand of the undisputed doyenne of New York Society–Mrs. Astor. To do this Alva invited everyone of importance in New York to her ball but stated that she could not invite the Astors as the family had not yet contacted the Vanderbilts. As the ball was planned for the day after Easter it would have been the first grand social event after Lent and therefore incredibly important to be seen at. This Victorian high-stakes scheme was a triumph as Alva soon found the Astor calling card at her mansion.[35] This was the Vanderbilt family's defining moment: all eyes would be on them.

Alice Vanderbilt was more than aware of the pressure on her as a representative of the Vanderbilt family as they sought to climb the social ladder. Days before the ball, newspapers were already beginning to print descriptions of the ball, including the tentative costumes of the most prominent guests.[36] However, amongst these early publications a confusing narrative emerged that further displays the pressure of choosing the perfect gown. The *Intelligencer Journal*, five days before the ball, conveyed a rumor that "the costumes of a Roman and a Venetian princess, which [Worth] [had] sent out for Mrs. Vanderbilt and Lady Mandeville respectively, do not meet with approval," and Alva was considering to instead "appear as an electric light."[37] Then an account in the *Chicago Tribune* a day before the ball described her costume as, "a Lady of Honor of the reign of Louis XIV., [sic] in a court dress of black velvet with old gold satin, point lace trimmings, and superb diamonds."[38]

Meanwhile Lady Mandeville, Alva's close friend, was said to be attending "in the character of 'The Four Seasons.'"[39] In all of this press, however, Alice Vanderbilt's name was not mentioned. It was not until the day after the ball that the final costume decisions were revealed:

> Mrs. Vanderbilt's [Alva's] irreproachable taste was seen to perfection in her costume as a Venetian Princess… Lady Mandeville['s]…dress was copied from a picture by Vandyke of the Princess Decroy…[and] Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt appeared as the Electric Light.[40]

This settlement suggests a curious journey for the Electric Dress in which Alva Vanderbilt, being unhappy with her costume, considered wearing the dress that Alice Vanderbilt ultimately wore. Then instead decided on the original costume of her friend, Lady Mandeville, who herself appeared in a costume somewhat similar to the description of Alva's "Lady of Honor" dress. Additionally, Alva was known to be "a very different type of a woman from her…sister-in-law."[41] While Alice upheld traditional Victorian values, Alva identified with the militant English suffragettes and eventually divorced William K. Vanderbilt.[42] She was described as

> gifted with very fine conversational powers, being quick in repartee and sarcastic at times, which has had rather the tendency to make her somewhat feared in society, of which she is devoted.[43]

One would then assume that in relation to the heavy emphasis placed on matching the costume to the personality and look of a person by both society and Charles Fredrick Worth, the two women's dresses would be quite different. A further hint towards the Electric Dress not being made for Alice Vanderbilt is how she wore it to the ball. In both photos of her at the ball one can see an added modesty cover across the chest and long gloves.[44] Alva did not shy away from these low-cut, sleeveless elements in her own costume, and are aspects that Charles Worth would likely have altered if the dress was originally for Alice.[45]

The dress receiving attention from not just one, but two Vanderbilt women is a testament of the desire to present what it symbolized in front of hundreds of New York elites. An analysis of the relationship between dress and pecuniary culture is offered by the 1899 book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, by Thorstein Veblen. He asserts that the wealthy class was using overly expensive, new, and impractical dress to broadcast their social status. Within this display, the specific "office of the woman [is] to consume vicariously for the head of the household; and her apparel is contrived with this object in view."[46]

In his argument, the women of a household acted as a reflection of their husband or father's social and financial status. This argument is bolstered by an article printed in 1885 that presents a detailed account of Cornelius Vanderbilt II's wealth and at one point mentions that "Mrs. Vanderbilt's diamonds are valued at $150,000," although "he wears none himself."[47] By specifically including the value of Mrs. Vanderbilt's jewels in a financial analysis of her husband's wealth and saying he wears none, this newspaper suggests that Mrs. Vanderbilt's fashion was an extension and unique display of her husband's wealth. By this Gilded Age logic, the costumes of Alva and Alice Vanderbilt had a layer of importance past personal presentation.

The Electric Dress asserted the image that the Vanderbilts were successful innovators whose family name belonged to the prestigious list of people who had enhanced society and who will continue to do so. For one night only Alice Vanderbilt was literally a shining beacon of gold, silver, pearls, and diamonds, but in life she was typically quiet. "A well-known modiste who makes most of her dresses," noted that Alice Vanderbilt "does not spend over $8090 a year on dress [*sic*], even when she is going into society."[48] If the gown was not following the Victorian fancy dress rules of complimenting one's personality, then it was most likely being used to deliver a message about the Vanderbilts as a whole. The gown "was the height of contemporaneity, as Thomas Edison's

Alice Vanderbilt's "Electric Light" dress, 1883. Charles Frederick Worth, The House of Worth, designer. Courtesy of The Museum of the City of New York.

lightbulb invention was then available in only few private homes."[49] The contemporary aspect was then pushed into the future by Alice Vanderbilt's stance in her photo being reminiscent of the Statue of Liberty, an exciting new symbol of the United States that was still yet to be fully built.[50] She would have been juxtaposed against her husband, sister-in-law, and brother-in-law who all dressed as historical figures. The dress was just as curated as the ball to deliver a message about the Vanderbilts to old New York society. The family was wholly announcing that they would no longer be treated as second-class elites and would now be leading New York society into the future. The dress's statement of newly claimed superior status was further made with, as the *Irish World* poem puts it,[51]

> Whence the procession that centers here?
> Millions in want and millions in fear,
> The brown hand of labor in idleness rest,
> And mothers their starvelings hug to their breasts
> No work but this wealth? That pain but this health?
> Scraps and hovels for labor that grovels?
> Idleness, darkness, sickness, and pall
> To pay for the wealth at the Vanderbilt ball.

For every glittering diamond at the ball, there was a railroad spike being struck by an exploited laborer just trying to make ends meet. Just six years before the ball, multiple railroad companies cut wages by ten percent to make up for falling revenues. They were met with outraged strikes which soon became deadly as President Rutherford B. Hayes sent in federal troops to quell the people, killing over one hundred in the attempt.[52] These were the people who lay beneath the thin sheet of gold of the Gilded Age; they were integral to the support of the shiny metal yet also hidden beneath it. They, however, were not blind to the obscene wealth gap, and one means of critique employed was to target the wealthy class's conspicuous consumption.

> Mrs. Vanderbilt appeared as 'Electric Light,' being completely enveloped in a dress of diamonds. In the language of old we enquire: why was not the money wasted in this display divided among the poor- the poor newspaper men for instance? 'The people be d—d,' though, is Van's sentiment.[53]

This account was published four days after the ball and the language of fantastical wonder was already abandoned. The words "enveloped in a dress of diamonds," did not seek to hold the Vanderbilts up as a people leading society into an innovative future, but rather were written with disdain. The people had not seen the dress that Alice Vanderbilt wore, they only read a description of it in the dozens of newspapers that published the exact same story of the Vanderbilt ball. However, it was the description alone that sparked debate amongst the masses who would never see even a fraction of the wealth thrown away in that one night. But it was not the money alone that left a bad taste in the mouths of the public.

The display of wealth was considered shameful not because of the party itself, but due to the people who spent the money and how they acquired it. An article in *The Western Call* makes careful argument that "there is nothing to be said in condemnation of social fêtes…like that of last night, [which] gave employment to hundreds of people for weeks and put thousands of dollars into circulation where it doubtless did good."[54] From the beginning of this article it appears that at the time there did exist an argument for the positive effects of these grand balls, and this is reflected in another article posted in the *St Louis Globe Democrat* stating that this is one side of the general discourse.[55] However, "on the other side, a luminous scribe goes on to show the idiocy of this opinion."[56] While it is unclear whether the article refers to the author within *The Western Call* or someone else, the former goes on to call the Vanderbilt ball a litany of callous names and then describes it as "a parade of newly-gotten wealth, which advertises the questionable methods of its getting by meretricious and nasty devices."[57] The author condemns the extortion, immorality, and flaunting in time of wide economic hardship. Unlike the previous critique calling for the charity of millionaires, this author expresses the opinion that the wealth was shameful from the very beginning. In a final retort, likely inspired by the gleaming gold costumes of the ball, the author warns the upper-class that it is unwise "to shake their golden chains in the faces of men as good as they are, who are bound by chains heavier and harder than iron."[58]

Ultimately, despite negative and positive reactions by all economic classes to the Electric Dress and the Vanderbilt ball as a whole, most of the United States and even the world would only hear the reoccurring description of "Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt [who] appeared as Electric Light in a white satin trimmed with diamonds and with a magnificent diamond head-dress."[59]

Then in true fashion of maintaining her public character as a traditional Victorian woman and mother, the following sentences are descriptions of her "daintily appareled" children who accompanied her.[60] It was not until seven years later at the promise of another fancy dress ball that the *New York Journal* published artist renditions of photos taken at the ball. These photos had never been seen before and Alice Vanderbilt in her electric light costume took the bottom left corner. She was drawn radiantly with her light held high above her head and a caption that read, "Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, who appeared in a blaze of diamonds as the Electric Light."[61]

The Electric Dress was a symbol of identity, upper-class socioeconomics, innovation, and societal moral division towards wealth inequality. The societal pressure of finding a gown that upheld the Vanderbilt name, aligned with the character of the wearer, and would tastefully display the wealth of the family was immense. Beyond that, the potential reactions to the chosen gown had potential to be detrimental to not only Alice Vanderbilt, but to the entire family's social climbing goals. Then, detached from the main concerns of the wearer, but directly tied to the thoughts of laboring Americans, were reactions of scorn for such opulence at a time of prevalent economic struggle. Surprisingly, though, amongst this was an overarching yearning for beauty and to be caught up in fantasy. Hundreds of accounts of the ball for years have acted as fairytales, giving as many details as possible so that readers could escape for just a moment into a world that they would never see. The Electric Dress was a vehicle for this vicarious escapism, a symbol of the age's opulent corruption, and one wealthy woman's straddling of self-representation and societal obligation.

Priscilla Bright is working towards an MA in Museum and Artifact Studies at Durham University. She is a graduate of Boston University with a BA in History. Her work as an educator with The Preservation Society of Newport County inspired her interest in the lives of nineteenth century women.

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Enclosed Garden with Saints Elizabeth, Ursula and Catherine, c. 1524. Courtesy of the Museum Hof van Busleyden, Mechelen, Belgium.

Domestically Divine:

MEDIEVALISM, FEMININITY, AND THE ENDURING RELIC

Heather Megan Barborak

The Victorian Medievalist movement affected all aspects of life, from art and literature to politics and religion. However, both modern scholars and contemporary critics have often overlooked the spectacular climax of the secular relic during the movement's height. Bodily relics, inspired by the rapid changes of Western society, transformed into a mainstream tradition of feminine spirituality, connecting the worlds of the living and the dead through contemplative craftwork. While patriarchal and anti-Catholic sentiments led to the disregard of such objects, surviving hair jewelry, wreaths, bouquets, and other mementos reveal a shift of cultural importance to secular ancestral devotion, and the newfound viewing of the relic as the artistic medium, itself. The lack of scholarly attention given to the genre has led to a gross misunderstanding of its ideologies; modern audiences have projected their contemporary distastes onto these objects, allowing their "macabre" and "morbid" perceptions of the piece to outshine their sentimental and spiritual potential. If given the attention they deserve, these objects reveal how Victorian women, intentionally or otherwise, adapted a precedent of uniquely feminine devotional experience to fulfill their needs in the nineteenth century. Such adaptations will be made clear by comparing the display and manipulation of human remains in an Antebellum period hair bouquet with that of the fifteenth century Enclosed Garden Altar.

Victorian Encounters with the Medieval Relic

Since the term's first use in the nineteenth century, "Medievalism" and its associated field of study have grown exponentially. It represents a form of escapism through romanticization of the past. For some, it is an outlet of nationalism, imagining an idealized origin to Anglo-Saxon society based in chivalry, honor, and intense religious devotion. For others, Medievalism is a form of mourning 'the way things were,' critiquing the modern political or economic state through comparison with an imagined past. *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Medievalism* describes it as "a modern and retrospective phenomenon,"[1] allowing for the study of both conscious and unconscious influences the Middle Ages had on later cultures. During the nineteenth century, however, Medievalism existed as an active ideological movement with which many Victorians aligned themselves. At the core of Victorian Medievalism was the separation from society's rapid industrialization, secularization, and legal reform. Nostalgia still plays a key part in the movement, placing importance on those pre-modern values which have supposedly been lost, such as fulfilling labor, human integration with nature, and spiritual ideals. This fascination with an idealized past resulted in part from developments in the academic understanding of the period. The destruction of medieval devotional objects during the Reformation, followed by the secularization of post-Enlightenment society, led to gross misunderstanding of the pre-modern period. It was not until surviving works emerged from parish churches and private collections that early antiquarians could study these missing fragments of history. The growing initiatives to preserve pre-modern history by literary and antiquarian societies in the nineteenth century led to greater public awareness for medieval European art, literature, and culture.

Among these recovered masterworks of Catholic art were the elaborately decorated reliquaries made to house the bodies and associated objects of holy figures. By the late sixteenth century, Protestant reform had effectively diminished the cult of the saints to a large degree. However, relic veneration endured; many celebrity relics of the seventeenth century were even imbued with healing powers and sought after by collectors.[2] Despite the persistence of relics, they were not immune to the rapidly shifting ideologies of the Western imagination. The Reformation brought about a familial shift from a fraction of the whole religious community to a stable foundation on which religious and social systems could thrive. Furthermore, Humanism placed newfound importance on the mortal life and the physical body. As a result, bodily fragments of loved ones were admired with similar esteem to that given to kings and saints of prior centuries. Thus, the sentimental bodily relic ascended into the mid-nineteenth century, taking the form of family heirlooms, memorial objects, and simple keepsakes.

The Victorian Relic

'Sentimental' or 'secular' relics of the Victorian period often incorporated human hair due to the material's unlimited accessibility and ostensibly immortal nature. An 1848 essay in *The Literary World* reads:

> The custom of keeping the hair of deceased friends, is one of the oldest that we can trace into the records of time. This has arisen from its convenience, and its being the part which under certain circumstances will last the longest of any in the body.[3]

Examples of hairwork from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were quite simple, incorporating small plaits into lockets or albums. Like medieval reliquaries, the significance of the hair manifested through gems, gold, or other precious materials. Testators consciously set money aside in their will for the creation of such ornamental pieces. In one eighteenth century hair brooch in the Victoria & Albert Museum, a lock of the late Elizabeth Eyton's hair sits encased in glass, surrounded by silver, enameled gold, pink sapphires, and diamonds. Although such a piece would have likely been made for a family member or close friend, the surrounding materials would ensure a lofty economic value. In comparison, the nineteenth century saw craft experimentation leading to more elaborate forms of hair art. As the century progressed, hair art shifted from two dimensional representational arrangements to sculptures, jewelry, and other forms of hair art which could incorporate gimp work, filigree designs, and sculptural elements into a single piece. The rising popularity of sentimental relics led professional hair workers to adapt accordingly, finding ways to meet demand more efficiently. Many found the pseudo-industrialization that followed to be a bad match for such an emotionally charged artform, and a growing mistrust in their manufacturer formed. Women's periodicals frequently encouraged their readers to learn the craft themselves, dissuading them from outsourcing to untrustworthy hair jewelers to "insure that they do actually wear the memento they prize, and not a fabric substituted for it, as we fear has sometimes been the case."[4] Within decades, hairwork shifted from the economic to the domestic sphere, becoming a fashionable pastime for middle class women. Labor soon replaced precious materials as the main attributor to a piece's value, focusing on the spiritual connection between the relic and the creator. Hair jewelry from the latter half of the nineteenth century, such as the Cardozo Family Brooch in the Minnesota Historical Society collections, completely excludes precious materials, working solely with the hair, itself, save the necessary hardware to maintain the piece's utility and form.

Regardless of the genre's mundane treatment, women understood the spiritual implications of working so closely with the body of a loved one. Deborah Lutz has theorized that

> to possess a piece of the beloved might provide a link to that body lost; it might comfort with its talisman-like ability to contain, and prove the existence of, an eternity, much as sacred relics did in the past for larger communities of believers.[5]

This theory is heavily supported by contemporary accounts, such as an 1860 advertisement for hair jewelers in *Godey's Lady's Book*, which reads:

> Hair is at once the most delicate and lasting of our materials, and survives us like love. It is so light, so gentle, so escaping from the idea of death, that, with a lock of hair belonging to a child or friend, we may almost look up to heaven and compare notes with the angelic nature—may almost say: 'I have a piece of thee here, not unworthy of thy being now.'[6]

Women understood that their work had cultural implications, as well, and was not completely separate from the public spheres of society. The *Cartes de Visite Collection*, now held by antiques dealer Evan Michelson, wonderfully exemplifies the spiritual implication of the body within the Victorian Imagination, and the way in which hair art has manipulated the body to honor the spirit. Not long after the Civil War, a woman from a well-off Connecticut family began to collect the hair of her loved ones, braiding, twisting, and carefully arranging the strands around metal wire to form an elaborate bouquet of flowers.[7] Almost every flower in the piece is unique, even when similar techniques are implemented. From afar, the only way in which the material

Hair brooch containing a lock of Elizabeth Eyton's hair, c.1754. Courtesy of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

reveals itself is through the blacks, browns, and greys that dominate the piece. However, close inspection reveals how the maker incorporated beads of all colors–blues, reds, golds, and greens–to the flowers. While most of the flowers burst from a porcelain vase, branches of hair also sprout from the corners of the frame. Once completed, the family commissioned a custom frame created to house not only the hairwork, but 20 visiting card portraits of each person incorporated. The popularity of hairwork grew concurrently with the lower class's access to photography, allowing for incredible mixed media pieces such as the *Cartes de Visite Collection* to appear in households across America. By using photography and bodily fragments in the same piece, the maker invokes both the visual and tactile senses, creating an intimacy unique to its form. The photographs, while plentiful, do not overpower the bouquet; the hair maintains its status as both primary medium and subject. The brown wood and golden accents of the frame compliment the hairwork beautifully, highlighting the golden beads and blonde highlights within.

Because the identities of the maker and those represented are lost, we cannot tell whether the piece depicts an extended family or a mixture of kin and close friends, nor whether those represented were alive during the piece's creation. Regardless, we must remember that nineteenth century American and British culture were surrounded by death. Funerary customs were intrinsically linked to social perception, and public displays of mourning were almost fashionable. Because death influenced practically every aspect of Victorian life, the creator would have been distinctly aware of the possibility that her piece would outlive all included, and such a fact would undoubtedly influence her work. In a review of a hair wreath displayed in the 1864 Mechanics' Fair, the author reports the wreath as being

> composed of the gray hairs of the grandsires long since departed, as well as that of the child, the youth, and the middle aged, all commingled and interwoven into one

Cartes de Visite Collection, c. 1850. Courtesy of Evan Michelson.

> imperishable wreath, to be handed down as an heirloom of the family tree.[8]

This comingling of hair, lacking any distinction between the living or the dead, similarly appears in the *Cartes de Visite Collection*, reflecting the liminal state in which the remains exist, moving between the realms of the mortal and the spiritual.

The Evangelical revival and rise of Spiritualism in the nineteenth century popularized the idea of a "domesticated heaven,"[9] a sort of spiritual homecoming, in which the dead wait amongst the living for their loved ones to follow. Unlike the Catholic Heaven, which completely separates itself from the world of the living, the domesticated heaven imitates, overlaps, and intermingles with the living world. Spiritual liminality within the Catholic imagination–that which allowed Christ to appear in visions and saints to heal through their relics–demanded an immense power which came almost naturally to Protestantism. The hair bouquet within the *Cartes de Visite Collection* places the body and spirit of the dead in both a metaphorical and literal setting of domesticity, and its ideological intricacies make it a fascinating case study for this subject. The hair's manipulation into a bouquet of cut flowers suggests an awareness of the human body's ephemeral nature: from the moment they are cut and assembled, the flowers of a bouquet have but days before they wither and decay. One would assume that, in association with such symbolism, the cut hair of a loved one acts as a *memento mori*, reminding the viewer of their own inevitable death. However, most modern scholars of hair art find the genre to be anything but *memento mori*. Deborah Lutz argues that "found behind many Victorian narratives of personal relic collecting is the wish that the relic, rather than being a memento mori, might mark the continued existence of the body to which it once belonged."[10]

Objects classified as *memento mori*, translated roughly as "remember death," cautioned viewers to live virtuously and remove themselves from earthly materiality. Imagery of bodies in various states of decay exploited people's fear of the mortal death, thus shifting the viewer's focus onto themselves. Hair art, on the other hand, not only turns the mind away from the self and towards the loved one, but "recalls the living state of the body."[11]

The Domesticated Heaven

Rather than a symbol of temporality, the bouquet, a common and humble form of home decoration, harkens back to the domesticity associated with the medium. Hair art was one of numerous forms of nineteenth century fancywork, a tedious form of domestic craft catered primarily to middle-class white women, separated from the fine arts as a sign of female virtue. This separation has benefitted patriarchal societies in some form for millennia, affecting many aspects of women's lives–however, none of these aspects were necessarily analogous, and the level of enforcement was rarely linear. In the Middle Ages, nuns' monastic duties often included craftwork such as the tapestry weaving and manuscript illumination. The repetitive nature of these mediums not only kept the women productive and chaste but produced fine goods with which the monastery could raise funds. Female craftwork, while not worthy of fame, had great economic value. However, as the Doctrine of Separate Spheres grew to dominate western morality, activities associated with the female sex were forcibly removed from the economic sphere, confining them solely to the domestic. Despite the oppressive nature of this association, retroactive analyses of nineteenth century craftwork reveal ways in which women applied their agency to the artform. While discouraged from vocalizing their beliefs and opinions, women expanded upon traditional methods of craft to uniquely express their own spirituality.

Female spirituality and domesticity are far from strangers: Caroline Walker Bynum points out how devotional objects in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries "reflect and sanctify women's domestic and biological experience."[12] This is not to say that these women felt no personal identification within their domestic roles. Many mystics, for example, have reported taking on both maternal and nuptial roles in their visions of Christ. In objects such as the *jésueaux*, nuns not only pondered their role as caretaker, but actively participated in it.[13] In Bynum's words, "devotional attitudes sometimes compensated for personal deprivation or provided an escape from oppression."[14]

While the *jésueaux* encouraged maternal roles, late Medieval images of the Pietà and Mater Dolorosa spiritually engaged the female viewer through the responsibility of caring for the dead. This ancient association between women and the deceased, often responsible for the preparation of the corpse or ritualistic mourning, only disappeared within the past 150 years. The cultural and spiritual importance of hairwork peaked during this transitional period, as the growing funeral industry shifted the responsibility of death care from the domestic to the economic realm. By removing one's interaction with a loved one's body, an integral part of the mourning process is lost, one which is necessary to reestablish stability.[15] However, studies of the effects of modern rituals suggest that "the specific behaviors that constitute those rituals are less important than performing some form of ritualistic behavior."[16] The creation of elaborate hair art acted as one substitute for this ritual, allowing women ensure their loved ones' bodies, albeit fragmented, remained close to the home.

The Appropriation of Ritual

As the nineteenth century progressed, the knowledge and visibility of Medieval artifacts trickled down from the highest classes to the public sphere. Reliquaries and other devotional objects steeped in Catholic ideology began to influence contemporary–including Protestant–visual culture. In fact, a subculture of Protestants who saw the allure in the pomp and circumstance of Catholic ritual emerged, spearheaded by the Oxford Movement in 1830 which strongly advocated the (re)integration of Catholic traditions into the Church of England. One scholar by the name of "Paletta" writes,

> If this [ritualism] is done in the Romish church, why not the Episcopal? We are an offshoot of the former, and in many places the ritual is the same in the two churches… Why then should it be necessary for us to debar all beauty of form and color from our church service?... Simply this: because that grain of Puritanism, brought over by our ancestors in the Mayflower, has taken root and flourishes among us; confining our ideas within a narrow scope, and teaching us that Ritualism is an invention of the evil one that must in the end lead us to perdition.

The Oxford Movement found a great deal of support in newfound societies of ecclesiologists, many of whom were members of the Church of England, who preserved and studied Medieval antiquities. The influence of these groups gave rise to a great Catholic revival on both sides of the Atlantic and the eventual formation of both the Anglo-Catholic and American Episcopalian churches.[17]

Even among those less convinced Protestants, the sensory opulence of Catholic worship was difficult to ignore. Many held a kind of morbid curiosity for Catholic rituals, fetishizing them under the guise of religious self-validation.[18] In an 1858 *Harper's Weekly* article, an anonymous author describes a Nun's profession with a surprising, albeit half-hearted, attempt at religious tolerance:

> When I beheld the affecting ceremonies of the sacrifice I forgot those rational abstractions, and lost my reason in my sympathy. I did not feel so much that a home was losing its member, and God's field its laborer, as that heaven was gaining a saint.[19]

In regard to the visual arts, John Davis outlines the many ways in which Protestant artists have downplayed the religious iconography while depicting Catholic subjects, "rendering it discreetly 'safe' for Protestant consumption."[20] Jenny Franchot has referred to this phenomenon as

> the bodily gaze of Protestantism...a gaze that acknowledged its spiritual desire, celebrated Catholicism as spectacle, and fantasized the consumption of this foreign substance rather than conversion to it.[21]

For many Victorians, Catholicism was indeed a 'medieval' practice, frozen in time and carried into the present. Viewing or participating in the sensory rituals of Catholic mass provided Protestants a fully immersive form of escapism from secularized society's oppressive nature. Hair art similarly employed this "bodily gaze," mimicking the elaborate ornamentation, ritualistic creation, and bodily veneration of the Catholic relic without sacrificing Protestantism's principal ideologies.

Side By Side:
Victorian Hair Bouquets and Late Medieval Shrines

The *Besloten Hofje*, a kind of group reliquary popular within the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, invokes a uniquely concentrated meditation by using relic collaging in tandem with an overwhelming sensory experience. Though few *Besloten Hofjes*, or Enclosed Gardens, have survived to the present, seven rest miraculously preserved in the city of Mechelen, Belgium. These mixed-media shrines each contain dozens of relics, acting as half shrine, half *kunstkammer*. The *Enclosed Garden of Saints Elizabeth, Ursula, and Catherine* alone contains a stone from Golgotha, eighteen pilgrim badges, various bones of the 11,000 virgins, and countless other precious relics. The holy objects surround a triad of saintly figures: Saint Ursula stands confidently over four of her fellow virgins with Saints Elizabeth and Catherine by her side. Beneath them, a miniature Mary Magdalene reveres the resurrected Christ. While these objects are openly displayed and labeled within the shrine, they become lost to the eye in a maze of flowers, grapes, shrubs, trees, and other natural wonders, all hand-crafted with silk thread. Due to its overwhelming nature, the viewer must meditate on the piece, tracing their eye over every leaf and petal, to reveal what the garden has to offer. This meditative wandering invokes the experience of walking through Paradise which Christians may expect after death, encountering the many saints and martyrs who similarly proved their allegiance to Christ. The heavily reliance on the senses during meditative devotion allows the viewer to feel as if they are already in Heaven, experiencing its overwhelming beauty and abundance firsthand in miniature.

Hairwork brooch c. 1860. Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society Collections.

The importance of this open display of the relic is well described by Kathryn Rudy, who compares the Enclosed Gardens with the eleventh century Reliquary of Saint Foy. Pilgrims visiting the latter saw the precious offerings of their predecessors physically added to the Saint's image. Her remains, however, are kept hidden. By contrast, viewers of the Gardens of Mechelen saw the bodily relics and pictorial representations of the saints simultaneously. The relics themselves seem to replace the precious gems and cameos of Saint Foy. Rudy further highlights how, in contrast with the display of monetary value by Saint Foy, the Gardens of Mechelen displays wealth through the labor necessary to create such a piece. As the Mechelen *Besloten Hofje* remained within the convent walls until the late twentieth century, they would not have been available for Victorian audiences. Nevertheless, the subtle change in the treatment and display of bodily relics that they represent foreshadows the phenomenon of nineteenth century hair art, in which the Victorians broke the boundary between relic and decoration through direct bodily manipulation.

Since the Gardens' emergence into the public eye in the late twentieth century, scholars have acknowledged them as monuments of Medieval female spirituality. Despite the presence of male produced objects within the shrines, Hannah Iterbeke has argued for their primary attribution to be given to the female religious orders which oversaw their production.[22] Silk flowers have particularly been associated with female *Klosterarbeit*, or monastery works, valued as both decoration and a product of spiritual labor. Not only was it a form of virtuous handicraft, but a form of *imitatio Mariae*, as revealed by a folk legend associating the Virgin Mary with the production of silk flowers.

When viewing the *Cartes de Visite Collection* and the *Enclosed Garden of Saints Elizabeth, Ursula, and Catherine* side by side, they are strikingly similar. The methods of creation, the setting and context in which they are viewed, and the effect they have on the viewer are only a few of the plethora of similarities. For both objects, the process of creation provided women a way to express spiritual agency. The dense arrangements of handcrafted florals represent countless hours of repetitive labor, in which women could spend in meditation.

Because the physical act of creating flowers of human hair so closely mimicked that of silk flowers, the mental and emotional circumstances were undoubtedly similar as well. They were more than objects to which women could aim their devotion–the act of creating a representation of an afterlife, whether domestic or paradisical, gave women in oppressive settings a sense of power over their own afterlives and those of their loved ones. Because the repetitive labor involved in both crafts produced the ideal conditions for meditative contemplation, both medieval nuns and Victorian housewives utilized these conditions to meet their own spiritual needs. Those assisting in the creation of the Enclosed Gardens could both visualize themselves within the gardens of Paradise and empathize directly with the Virgin, mimicking her actions for Christ's satisfaction. The creator of the *Cartes de Visite Collection* similarly meditated on the domestic heaven she crafted both *for* and *with* her loved ones. She would contemplate her own place within the bouquet, eternally interlaced with both her family and her central religious community. Despite the Protestant sentiments linked with the genre, women working with the hair of the deceased could still empathize with the Virgin, mournfully meditating over a fragmented body. If the hair art happened to be solely sentimental, the act of creation remained a righteous form of labor, keeping the woman virtuous and out of trouble.

Relics, being of profane physical nature, cannot hold power over their viewer without first providing clarification of their sacred origins. Within the *Enclosed Garden*, small manuscript labels, or *authentiques*, surround each bone, rock, and otherwise spiritually significant object, declaring their identities and validating their status as relics. Kathryn Rudy points out that without such labels to give them voice, the objects become mute, appearing unremarkable to their onlookers.[23] Without the context of each object, the viewer feels no emotional connection to the shrine's contents, nor any motivation to form such a connection, contaminating the intended object-viewer experience. Such anxieties are likewise found regarding hair relics. As previously discussed, hairwork production moved from the economic to domestic spheres for fear that the remains they receive were fraudulent. Victorian relics which collaged the remains of numerous individuals, such as our *Cartes de Visite Collection*, had similar forms of identification in the form of a handwritten key detailing whose hair is included and where.[24] Being so closely knit with the subjects, the creator and immediate viewers of the wreath could likely attribute each lock of hair to the face of the absent individual, perhaps even recalling the memory of when the lock was taken. Thus, the keys likely served as a conscious projection of the relatives' identities into the future, serving as *authentiques* for future generations of filial piety. The twenty visiting cards surrounding the bouquet similarly authenticate the identities of the relics, while simultaneously acting as relics through their perception as an enduring fragment of the absent body. This merging of the relic, the reliquary, and image further connects the collection to medieval reliquary culture–the photograph exists as a profane form of *acheiropoieta*, working in tandem with the bodily remains to present the deceased's memory and soul directly to the viewer.

Anti-Popery and the Concealment of the Relic

We have explored the numerous ways in which Victorian hairworks align with medieval traditions of the bodily relic. Despite the vast range of similarities, published scholarship has only scratched the surface of its possibilities. Rachel Harmeyer blames our fragmented understanding of the genre on its inherent cross-disciplinary nature,[25] while Helen Sheumaker suggests it stems from modern ideas of cleanliness, causing an unconscious repulsion to hair and other 'unclean' bodily products. Most scholars have come to an agreement that patriarchal hierarchies within art historical canon have fueled the dismissal of such female-coded handicrafts, but attributing the lack of scholarship to one facet of the genre's meaning will not provide the full picture. One reason for the repudiation of hair art which has yet to be explored lies in the strong anti-Catholic sentiments which proliferated American society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Protestantism had dominated European-American society since the earliest settlers, who often migrated to America to escape Catholic persecution. During the rapid rise of industry in the nineteenth century, waves of Catholics immigrated to the United States, bringing their ideologies and traditions with them. Between 1789 and 1850, Catholicism rose from one to thirteen percent of the American population, and by the first World War, the Protestant-Catholic ratio was 4:1.[26] Anti-Catholic sentiment grew concurrently, and practices associated with 'Popery' such as monasticism and idolatry were villainized. John Rogers' 1841 work *Anti-popery; or Popery unreasonable, unscriptural and novel* begins with a thorough index of anti-Catholic terms and sentiments, such as "Cannibals. By eating of the body and blood, literal, of Christ, in the mass wafer, men are made cannibals, 194."[27] Between 1880 and 1920, America experienced another sharp increase in immigration, as well as Evangelical revivalist crusades and the expansion of the Klu Klux Klan, forming the perfect political climate from which anti-Catholic sentiments could grow. It comes as no surprise that the sentimental relic experienced its peak and subsequent decline within these decades, as its very association with Catholic tradition made it a threat to the Protestant Identity.

Victorian men felt especially threatened by Catholicism's influences, believing the flamboyant ritualism to be at odds with their 'masculine' self-discipline.[28] Catholicism was an institutional embodiment of the undesirable qualities of womankind, appealing to women's emotional nature, their "delight in superficial appearances," and their supposedly natural masochistic inclinations. While the third quality concerns itself with monastic asceticism, emotion and "superficial appearances" are intrinsic to the experience of viewing a relic and its reliquary. The reliquary acts as a superficial manifestation of the relic's significance, invoking a more powerful emotional response from the viewer. In the case of hairwork, the relic confronts the viewer directly, merging the superficial appearance and its deeper spiritual and ideological implications. At the same time, by choosing to manipulate the remains into a decorative and symbolic object, the creator has encased them in a kind of emotional reliquary. When confronted by an object such as the *Cartes de Visite Collection*, the viewer immediately registers the piece before them as being composed of bodily fragments. They also, however, see the hours of spiritual and emotional labor which went into its physical transformation. The hair relic's significance, like that of the Enclosed Gardens, is represented through visible labor rather than any other external decoration. Because the object is, quite literally, made from emotion, anti-Catholic ideology reinforces its categorization as a feminine object.

Not only was the secular relic snuffed out by anti-Catholic sentiments, but the onslaught of World War I resulted in an ideological shift towards realism, forcing society to face the harsh realities of postwar life. Realists critiqued the sentimentality and heightened emotion associated with the ideologies of the Romantics and Medievalists, as well as their idealized focus on the past. Sentimentality became a negative trait in Progressive society, associated with conservativism and a lack of progress. Such a rapid shift in ideology resulted in the perception of the Medievalist movement as a second "dark-age" in the Progressive imagination. According to Evan Michelson, once tastes began to drift away from the sentimentality of hair art, families would throw away what they considered to be worthless pieces of fancywork.[29] In a matter of decades, Western culture had essentially abandoned hair art before the implications of such works could be assessed.

In the last fifty years, the art historical field has begun taking efforts to reanalyze the art historical canon, amplifying communities which have fallen through the cracks of history. The reassessment of the art-craft division, formed under art history's patriarchal pretexts, has opened a treasure chest of individual histories, giving a voice to those overshadowed by the rich, the white, the male, and so on. Amid the Antebellum period's rapid social, economic, and political change, middle-class women lacked outlets through which they could voice their concerns. Handicrafts became a stable, nonthreatening means of expression, through which women could project their beliefs, anxieties, and other thoughts. For modern scholars, this gives us a snapshot of the society in which they operated, and how they coped within that society. Hair art alone gives us a glimpse into female perceptions of familial relations, heaven, death, and the spirit in the nineteenth century, falling within a timeline of uniquely feminine artistic tradition. Only recently has hair art been afforded scholarly interpretation, and that which currently exists lacks intersectional analysis. How, for example, do the implications of White hair as a living piece of the absent body reflect the racial tensions of the Antebellum period, when hair art's popularity grew concurrently with the extreme policing of Black and Native American hair? The genre produces no shortage of questions, and reassessing our perceptions of hairwork is the first step in filling in the gaps of understanding.

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Mother and daughter sewing, c. 1860. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

A Look at Victorian Motherhood

THROUGH THE *LADIES' HOME JOURNAL*

Ailin Montgomery

"The fragments of hours we may seize from day to day, and that inclination would lead us to spend on fancy work, pet studies or in idleness, let us give them to the children, filling the day with self denyings that necessarily must enter into much of it,"[1] says Clarissa Potter in an 1884 edition of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. By the waning half of the nineteenth century, Victorian womanhood was a rigid prescription of morality, modesty, and submissiveness. Such tenets appear particularly evident in the popularly consumed publication *Ladies' Home Journal and Practical Housekeeper*. Each issue of this publication features a section on motherhood and childrearing targeted towards the middle-class Victorian woman. Why specifically middle class? The *Ladies' Home Journal* was created as a mode through which advertisers could sell aspirational products comprising the middle-class lifestyle. Silver sets, finely made dolls, and standing organs of walnut wood were only a few of the many products to appear in the supplemental editions As the publication expanded, these advertisements were coupled with advice columns touting the lifestyle of the woman whose attention was focused on her home, bereft of any labor in the outside world. This lifestyle allowed her to embrace the ideologies of Victorian womanhood without the complications that working-class women faced. Additionally, her readership of the publication within this time period allowed her to follow the magazine at a time when American Victorianism had fully adopted the bourgeois sensibilities characteristic of the Victorian era. The *Ladies' Home Journal* is a vital source in understanding how Victorian motherhood was a national conversation authored by and for women, reinforcing the cultural values of the Victorian era.

How did the influence of *Ladies' Home Journal* come to be in the homes of so many women? The *Ladies' Home Journal* was created in 1883 as a supplement for *Tribune and Farmer*, a publication for Philadelphia farmers.[2] This supplement was created at the request of advertisers who wished for a section in which they could market their wares to their target demographic: aspirational and middle-class women.[3] By 1884, the supplement expanded, becoming an independent periodical and releasing monthly issues still laden with advertisements. Yearly subscriptions were 50 cents while single copies were typically priced at six cents. The journal was largely for the middle class or the aspirational working class. Articles were, by and large, penned by women. These articles were divided into sections by topic, the typical edition consisting of the sections: "Dress Material," "The Practical Housekeeper," "Flowers and House Plants," "Artistic Needlework," and "Mothers' Corner."

In *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* Deborah Gorman states, "Much Victorian idealization of femininity was concerned with its manifestation by adult women in their roles as wives and mothers."[4] The cult of domesticity pushed women further into the home as "the most important locus for cultural transmission in Victorian society was the home."[5] In a *Ladies' Home Journal* article by Ada E. Hazell concerning parental discipline, she asks, "Can you blame them for the environment of heredity, or will you by your example strive to teach them to control the evil in their nature, and foster the good?"[6] This goodness was to come from the Mother, the ultimate transmitter of Victorian values.

The definition of "proper" motherhood was never static. As the *Ladies' Home Journal* was published in America for an American audience, it is important to acknowledge the shifting traditions of motherhood for Americans in the nineteenth century. Historian Jodi Vandenberg-Daves states,

> Nineteenth-century Americans began to romanticize childhood; they imagined children as innocent, even vehicles of redemption for adults.[7]

Likewise, an article from the *Ladies' Home Journal* characterizes the child as "an immortelle to testify for or against you at the judgment."[8] While colonial philosophies of parenthood favored the reinforcement of harsh parental authority, nineteenth-century Victorian culture favored purity, innocence, and loveliness–chiefly reflected through the mother.[9] Historian Nora Doyle adds,

> Evangelical Christianity in both England and America supplied a new emphasis on emotion, female piety, and motherhood.[10]

Through these new revelations, women and children became exalted. While the Enlightenment signaled a shift in philosophy, it also represented a change in Christian doctrine. Children and babies became symbols of purity and innocence, free of sin. Therefore, a mother's influence became the chief priority in child rearing, and her virtues were directly linked to those of children. She, through her new central position in Christian doctrine, became the moral authority in her church, her family, and her greater society.[11]

As mothers were the arbiters of purity, mothering developed new standards. Mothers adopted notions of "moral" and "sentimental" motherhood. Mothering centered not only on the physical, but emotional needs of children–even at the sacrifice of the mother. With this new approach to childrearing, motherhood was refined into a "skill," not instinctual or learned by association. Rather, motherhood required diligent learning from experts in the art of mothering. Advice columns such as "Mother's Corner" in the *Ladies' Home Journal* acted as avenues for honing this skill.

Moral motherhood was a status constantly fostered through action within the home. The Victorian woman was, ideally, isolated from any rudeness or immorality beyond her domicile. However, it was her duty to be the keeper of innocence and purity in her children; guarding them from the same harshness of the public sphere she was separated from. Sections devoted to childrearing in *Ladies' Home Journal* often included discussion of the danger of immoral media to children.

> Pure pictures, pure stories explained and told them in babyhood may save them being tempted by licentious stories when older,

one article proclaims.[12] It was the mother's job to guard the private home from such items, so as to avoid a child developing "a coarse, sensual spirit."[13] The Victorian woman was not a clueless, sheltered product of society. She was an agent in the continuation of a status quo–one that demanded she reconcile her innocence with her obligation to the perpetuation of moral superiority.

Important to note is a change in family structure throughout the Victorian era. By the publication of the first edition of the Ladies' Home Journal in February of 1883, the average family size had reduced from five to seven children to, on average, two to three.[14] By this time, larger families were associated with the working class, relying upon manual labor from both mother and father to support themselves. However, those who managed to have only two or three children were, in theory, not burdened by the economic demands that forced mothers to work–a concept that betrayed Victorian standards of gendered roles. Child psychology and the role of childhood experience became prevalent in the Enlightenment of the 1700s and expanded into the 1800s. Throughout the Victorian era, this new focus on childhood would steadily increase in popularity, impacting the emphasis placed on the presence of parents in the lives of children.[15] By the time the *Ladies' Home Journal* was first published, the ideal family was small but child-centered.

While the Victorian era succeeded in ideologically centering the child, another aspect of social culture complicated parenthood. In an era marked by social stratification, the ability to financially support a personal staff was in vogue. Families belonging to the middle class were expected to employ as many servants as their income would allow.[16] However, motherhood demanded a different perspective on hired help in caretaking. As the mother was the attendant of the domestic sphere, much criticism arose concerning an apparent theme of mothers shirking responsibilities and turning them over to servants and nurses. "Has it gone out of fashion for mothers to take care of their own children?" a *Ladies' Home Journal* article titled "Where are the mothers?" laments.[17] To authors contributing to the *Ladies' Home Journal*, motherhood was not only the duty but the privilege of the mother, a time to "teach them to love purity, pure stories, pure speech, pure lives."[18] Children who grew up in nurseries with wet nurses and servants often had limited contact with their parents. These clashing ideologies make this concern appear justified. However, another social element may be at play. The *Ladies' Home Journal* had, throughout its decades of publication, been lauded for its perpetuation of the value of *thrift*.[19] One can reasonably assume then that the journal was targeted mainly at middle-class audiences. Such an audience could abide by the social expectations of a home-bound mother. However, the middle class could often afford only one or two domestic helpers. For the mothers of these families, servant-reliant childrearing was not a reality, such duties falling upon her, oftentimes entirely.[20] While these writers are critical of those who hired their childcare, the elevation of a mother's presence may have reinforced a sense of importance for the greater majority of mothers who did not possess the privilege to do so. Regardless, this criticism helped strengthen the social status of the mother, especially in lieu of caretakers to signify one's wealth and status. As Vandenberg-Daves states:

> Moral motherhood ideology had a knack for creating distinctions…between "good" mothers and "bad" mothers in ways that reinforced systems of privilege and disfranchisement based on race and class.[21]

Those who had the time and the resources to attend to their child's every need personally, who did not have to invest time or energy in any additional labor, could enjoy the status given to the "good" mother.

Alongside a mother's duty to instill the value of purity, she was also tasked with reinforcing gender norms in her children. Toys and literature were gendered as a way to impress societal norms. In the *Ladies' Home Journal*, for example, there often appeared a section titled "Stories for Girls," typically featuring parables about love and marriage.[22] Parenting styles, too, were often gendered. The *Ladies' Home Journa*l did not shy away from explicitly acknowledging the mother's role in establishing gender roles through child-rearing. In the case of boys, a mother needed to cross the threshold into the world of boyhood if she was to foster in her sons the virtues of Victorian masculinity. In an 1888 section of "Mother's Corner" Minnie Sprague says of male children,

> Yes, I acknowledge it, some boys are horrid–they are unbearable–but I assert boldly, their mothers are to blame.[23]

She asks mothers to treat their young boys as if "they are but embryo men."[24] She continues, encouraging mothers, if they feel a divide between the outside world and their sons, to "leave all other duties and pleasures and devote yourself again to him."[25] Much as she was a wife to her husband, the mother was to be the attendant to the wills and needs of her son. This connection between husband and son continues as Sprague encourages mothers to retain their youth, to dress "with as much care for the smiles of her son as she did her lover" so as to strengthen her to "sway her son to lofty purposes."[26] Another article from 1884 states:

> wise is the mother who dresses herself prettily…the mothers who have done this have been the mothers of good men.[27]

Not only must the wife appeal to the aesthetic tastes of her husband, she must extend these pleasures to her son, suggesting the pervasive nature of aesthetics as a determinant of her position in her society, and her success in her calling as a mother to her sons.

Why was it the sons that should be swayed to lofty purposes?

The *Ladies' Home Journal and Practical Housekeeper* masthead, c. 1889.

Mothers were largely independent agents in defining the parameters of their parenting–including the extent to which they gendered their parenting. However, it was, for the middle-class mother, in her best interest to abide by the structure of the Victorian social system. In maintaining its tenets she preserved her status and ensured the wellbeing of her brood. "Republican Motherhood," a term coined by historian Linda Kerber, was a movement that was rooted in post-revolutionary America.[28] This principle asked mothers to contribute to the welfare of their republic not through the ability to serve in office or vote, but in their ability to raise dutiful sons capable of fulfilling the duties allowed to them by the republic. Historian Jodi Vandenberg-Daves argues:

> Mothers, still economically dependent and politically disenfranchised, would nonetheless be saving the world through self-abnegation and virtue, one child at a time.[29]

This ideology simultaneously reinforced the domestic limitations of the mother while elevating her status. At first glance, "republican motherhood" blended the domestic and the public spheres for women–something taboo. At the time, mothers were still largely barred from the public sphere but it was their duty to understand the virtues required by the public arena so as to prepare their sons accordingly. However, the *Ladies' Home Journal* suggests an alternative avenue of consideration. In an 1887 article titled "An Appeal" author Velma Melville writes,

> There is father with his superior physical strength and dominant will, who naturally has a great, if not greater power over the offspring, especially the boys.

She asserts that he is likely the strongest influence over the character of sons and is seen as the "grandest, most noblest, most to-be imitated creature in the world." She argues that while sons run to their mothers for sympathy, they feel their own sympathy towards her "because she is only *a woman*." Despite this sympathy, she suggests that the son feels greater affection for his mother as

> she never looks at him fiercely or speaks in loud, blood-curdling tones when he has been recreant: and her interest in him is not of the periodical, spasmodic sort that his father's is.[30]

She suggests that rather than overcoming her son's prejudice towards her, the mother should balance the influence of the father, much like she balances out his role in the public sphere. Mothers, according to Melville, should teach their sons "humanity," kindness to the "weak and helpless whether fellow beings or dumb brutes."[31] While bereft of other avenues of civic participation, mothers had the power to instill moral values like humanity in their sons. Through their influence, these mothers yielded a new generation of public servants, capable of maintaining the order established by Victorian society. Republican motherhood not only allowed women to contribute to their society, but as historian Louise Stevenson argues "the concept of republican motherhood helped them gain control over their own lives," allowing women to act with moral authority.[32]

While boys needed to be prepared to enter the public sphere, girls would need to learn to conform to their own tightly bound vision of gender awaiting them. Says Deborah Gorham in *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*,

> Girls had to be prepared, both as future mothers, and representatives of their class, to understand, and to be able to transmit, the bourgeois virtues.[33]

A mother needed to extend to her daughter the virtues of motherhood and social uprightness.[34] "Give your daughters a thorough education," a journal article from 1885 begins, listing such educational tasks as cooking, cleaning, the making of "sensible" dresses, and the ability to gauge the potential of a marriage–to be based upon a man's character rather than his appearances or wealth.[35] Another article proclaims frankly, "mothers...make practical housekeepers of your daughters, whatever else you make of them."[36] From childhood, the daughter was to be molded into the ideal helpmate, domestic in all senses "otherwise they will be ugly and disagreeable to their husbands."[37] Standards like modesty and meekness were to be instituted from an early age. Contributor Mary E. Carwill laments the boisterous behavior of a little girl she witnessed on a train car stating, “a young girl without modesty is wanting in a maiden’s greatest charm.”[38] It was, of course, the fault of a mother if a daughter lacked such charms–even at a young age.

Daughters were raised in what Smith-Rosenberg refers to as an “apprenticeship system.”[39] This system began in childhood. Mothers were often encouraged to give their daughters dolls as they allowed daughters to play in notions of motherhood and housework, their need for a wardrobe even encouraging girls to take on sewing and needlework sincerely.[40] Advertisements for fine dolls were a staple of the journal, one even suggesting that the doll was perfect for little girls to “care for and educate.”[41]

An article titled “Little Helpers” speaks to this encouragement to acclimate daughters to domestic duties, its opening line asking “mothers, do you ever realize how much help our little five-year-old girls are?” Author Thorny Poppy lauds the small contributions of her daughter, ever willing to aid in household chores for, “work is a blessing and nothing in our life will bring us more real pleasure than being able to do our work, whatever it is, well.”[42] Encouragement to participate in chores was not exclusive to the daughter. A “Mother’s Corner” from August of 1888 written by Annie Curd suggests, “our girls often receive this training than do our boys, yet there is no good reason for it, except custom has made it so.” She continues, suggesting

> boys can and should be taught to think, and do all in their power to make house-keeping easy for mother and sister.[43]

While these suggestions defy notions that housework should be left to the female members of the household, they work to establish the son’s participation as a virtue, and the daughter’s as a rule.

Such acts of outspoken authority like discipline could challenge Victorian femininity’s tenets of reserved nobility. However, the *Ladies’ Home Journal* suggested a balance, if not a complete reconciliation, of these demands. Ada E. Hazell’s “Parental Discipline” addresses the reluctance of mothers to compromise feminine virtues through discipline, “a praise-worthy weakness, although deplorable.”[44] Hazell suggests employing methods that allow one to balance these two demands as best possible. “Practice self-restraint unceasingly” she insists, “strive without ceasing…conquering yourself will also ennoble your offspring.” She suggests that patient reinforcement is key and that mothers should not “indulge in the hasty word” or “slap suasion” as methods of discipline.[45] The restraining of children demanded the mother’s restraint of self. “Respect yourself too much to give away to impatience or anger before your child,” author Lucy Agnes Hayes asks in the article “Talks to Mothers.”[46] To allow her emotionality to overtake her would be to betray not only herself but her children as well. Hayes observes that self-restraint, for the sentimental mother, required forbearance, “Sunny with love which means self-sacrifice, reading of the future and trust in God.” Mothers who strayed from this sunniness acted contrary to their greatest calling. Such an infraction’s impact is captured in an article titled “Parental Correctness,” “the man commits a crime, and so does the woman who will send a child to bed with a wounded spirit.”[47] The same article emphasizes the importance of the woman’s rule over the domestic arena,

Advertisments seen in the *Ladies’ Home Journal and Practical Housekeeper*, March 1887.

> Let the family table be always a meeting-place of pleasantness and affection and peace, and for the sweeter feelings of domestic life.

It was not only the mother's duty to approach reprimand with self-restraint but she must also work to foster greater peace within her home, so as to quell any threats to its idyllic status. These sections also make tangible the level of emotional regulation demanded by the Victorian woman. As the master of the domestic sphere, she was not entitled to her own tears or anger. The mother's chief role was to attend to her children so as to raise a new generation of arbiters of Victorian culture.

In light of the difficulties evident through the physical and emotional restraint demanded of Victorian mothers, why did daughters not work to shirk the expectation of motherhood? Amongst many social influences, Smith-Rosenberg suggests that daughters largely accepted the same roles as their mothers as few other avenues of adulthood presented themselves. As long as the role was presented as sustainable and viable, it acted as the most attractive option to girls in a world that provided little reference for alternative avenues of life.[48] In fact, the domestic sphere was often viewed as a privilege afforded to women. As long as Victorian culture remained the culture of the upper classes, motherhood would remain the most appropriate and honorable pursuit a woman could undertake. It must be noted that these pieces of advice appear in a periodical written by and for women. These women were aware of the privilege that came with the ability to abide by the tenets of their society. Upon a backdrop painted by fear of regression and an insistence on social structure, women worked to preserve and leverage the exaltation of motherhood that became a hallmark of Victorian culture. The *Ladies' Home Journal* proves that Victorian motherhood was a national conversation authored by female contributors for a female audience, a conversation to reinforce the cultural values of the Victorian era.

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Notes

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4. Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 5.
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6. Ada E. Hazell, "Parental Discipline," *Ladies' Home Journal* 5, no. 6, 1888: 5.
7. Jodi Vandenberg-Daves, *Modern Motherhood: An American History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 2014: 2.
8. Lucy Agnes Hayes, "Talks to Mothers," *Ladies' Home Journal* 5, no. 7, 1888: 7.
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13. Ibid.
14. Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*, 16.
15. Ibid.
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17. "Where are the Mothers?" *Ladies' Home Journal* 1, no. 11, 1884: 3.
18. Clarissa Potter, "This is my Time," *Ladies' Home Journal* 2, no. 1, 1884: 3.
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21. Vandenberg-Daves, *Modern Motherhood: An American History*, 73.
22. Amelia E. Barr, "Stories for Girls: Choosing a Wife," Ladies' Home Journal 2, no. 9, 1885: 3.
23. Minnie Gebbert Sprague, "A Plea for the Boys," *Ladies' Home Journal* 2, no. 9, 1885: 3.
24. Sprague, "A Plea for the Boys," 5.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. "Our Mother," *Ladies' Home Journal* 1, no. 2, 1884: 6.
28. Daves-Vendenberg, *Modern Motherhood: An American History*, 17.
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32. Louise L. Stevenson, *The Victorian Homefront: American Thought and Culture, 1860-1880: With a New Preface*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2001): xxvi.
33. Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*, 68.
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36. A.H.E., "A Word to Mothers," *Ladies' Home Journal* 3, no. 1, 1885: 3.
37. Ibid.
38. Mary E. Cardwill, "Immodest Children," *Ladies' Home Journal* 5, no 5, 1888: 5.
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40. Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*, 76.
41. *Ladies' Home Journal* 5, no.8, 1888: 14.
42. Thorny Poppy, "Little Helpers," *Ladies' Home Journal* 4, no. 7, 1887: 5.
43. Annie Curd, "Our Boys and Girls, How to Make them Helpful, Healthy and Happy," *Ladies' Home Journal* 5, no. 9, 1888: 7.
44. Ada E. Hazell, "Parental Discipline," *Ladies' Home Journal* 5, no. 6, 1888: 5.
45. Ibid.
46. Agnes Hayes, "Talks to Mothers," *Ladies' Home Journal* 5 no. 7, 1888: 7.
47. Hall's Journal of Health, "Parental Correctness," *Ladies' Home Journal* 5, no. 9, 1888, 5.
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Charles West Cope (1811-1890) *The Young Mother*, 1845. Courtesy of The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The Fundamental Duty of a Woman:

NURSING GLASSES, MATERNITY, AND FEMININITY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Katie Cynkar

Among the overflowing collection of decorative arts objects at Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library reside three everyday colorless glass objects: a breast pipe, a nipple shell, and a feeding bottle.[1] These objects that appear alien to us today were common nineteenth century sundries used to assist nursing infants. On the surface, they reflect the interconnection between motherhood and femininity in the nineteenth century. What is not so transparent is the reality of infant feeding and motherhood. The survival of a child was, as it still is, dependent upon obtaining the nutrients given from breast milk, but breast feeding could be a challenge depending on the health of the mother. While these nursing glasses helped, up until the mid-nineteenth century these objects were only available to white middle- and upper-class women. Mothers who did not fall into this group, such as working-class women or enslaved African American women, had to find other means of feeding their infants. Two questions come to mind as a result of this contrast: What does it mean to be a mother and what does it mean to be a woman in the nineteenth century? By taking a closer look at these peculiar nursing glasses and their limited accessibility, I hope to answer these questions.

Several scholars across a variety of different specialties have shown how infant feeding in Western society has had a direct effect on the economic and cultural structure of society.[2] In the nineteenth century, most medical texts recommended strict feeding regiments depending on the age of the infant. In *The Parent's Guide* from 1854, it was recommended that for the first six to eight months of the infant's life,

> the administration of the milk should become as regular as possible at certain stated intervals, say from two to four hours according to appetite.[3]

Early iterations of these objects can be traced back for thousands of years with different uses in the breastfeeding process. Though the breast pipe, the nipple shell, and the sucking bottle each have different uses, they all helped nursing mothers who were having trouble breastfeeding in one way or another.

The breast pipe allowed the mother to extract the milk from her breast by herself. As depicted in the earliest known illustration of a breast pipe in the 1577 Italian manuscript, *De Art Medica Infantium, Libri Quatuor*, the nursing woman placed the larger, flared opening over her nipple and sucked through the elongated tube to produce milk which was then caught in the spherical bowl. Once procured, the mother poured the extracted milk into a feeding vessel to give to the infant. This design and use continued through the beginning of the nineteenth century. Authors of medical texts relayed the same design for this instrument as seen in this description from a 1729 nursing guide:

De Lacte ob Aliquem Terrorem Deperdito vel Immuto, engraving, 1577. As published in *De Arte Medica Infantium Libri Quantuor*, by Ognibene Ferrari. Courtesy of the Wellcome Collection, London.

> A Mother that has a mind to nurse her own Child…ought to procure herself to be suck'd by some poor Woman, or else milk it out herself, by an Instrument of Glass, made for that Purpose. This Instrument has two Openings, one which is wide and flat, to be apply'd to the Breasts; and the other like a Neck or Gullet, long, and narrow at the End, that it may be put into the Mouth without any Inconvenience.4

In general, the main purpose of the breast pipe was to help relieve mothers with engorged breasts. According to A. E. Small's 1856 medical text,

> The exciting causes are numerous,–colds, passion or anger and fright, a bruise, putting the child to the breast too late, or taking it from the breast too suddenly in weaning, or the death of the child, &c. When any irritation arises, the breasts should be kept properly drawn. For this purpose, a breast-pipe may be used, or still better, the lips of the nurse.[5]

The breast pipe was also used when the breasts were inflamed or infected or the nipples were cracked. In 1811, Mary Palmer Tyler recalled that when her first child was sick with a fungal infection, her breasts had become distended which led to her nipples becoming cracked. For two months after her infant's illness, he would constantly throw up what he had nursed because blood had mixed with the milk he swallowed. For Mary, nursing was excruciatingly painful. Despite this, she entreated

> every mother to undergo every thing short of death or lasting disease, rather than refuse to suckle her child… if [milk] can be drawn out with sucking glasses, and the

Top to bottom: Child using a feeding bottle, as published in *Ein Regiment...fur die jungen Kinder*, by Heingrich von Louffenber, 1492. Ceramic infant bottles, c. 1840. Courtesy of the Wellcome Collection.

stimulation.[9] They were often used in conjunction with breast pipes in order to raise inverted or retracted nipples or to help the formation of new nipples after ulceration had occurred. According to George Denig in his 1835 medical treatise, the breast pipe would draw out the nipple so that it remained erect and then a glass nipple shield would be applied as to keep the nipple standing out for the baby to latch to.[10] Just like the breast pipe, the nipple shell was also used to treat and protect sore, inflamed or infected nipples. In Michael Underwood's popular medical treatise from 1818, he stated:

> Should [sore nipples], or even an abscess take place, they are both far less distressing under proper management than has been usually imagined...I beg leave to mention here a new contrivance, which has succeeded so far beyond every former device, for defending the nipples, and enabling women to nourish their own children, that I cannot but wish to extend its advantages, by this public recommendation of the Nipple Shield.[11]

Unlike breast pipes, nipple shells or shields were constructed with a variety of materials and shapes. Other than glass, nipple shields were made of lead, pewter, tin, silver, horn, bone, ivory, and wood. Shields made of these materials took on a different form than those made of glass. These shields consisted of small raised cones with a pierced end and a flat open end to be placed over the nipple. The infant could still be nursed from the breast while the mother's nipple was protected. The glass nipple shells differed in that they did not have this perforated end. Instead, these objects consisted of a closed dome with a sloping hole on one side with a small cut hole on one edge in order for the vessel to be easily emptied. The Winterthur nipple shell differs in one regard. Instead of a cut hole on one side, there is a ringed spout. This is similar to a nursing nipple patented in 1858.[12] Created by C. H. Davidson, this nursing nipple had a spout so that rubber accessories could be attached to turn the shell into a pump or a feeding vessel.

Nipple shells had a similar path to the United States as breast pipes, but they were much more common. Nipple glasses were imported from London and Bristol into the United States starting in the 1752 with the first advertisements for nipple shells from the United States coming from the American Glass Warehouse in Kensington in 1775.[13] Simple in manufacturing process, these objects were made in most glass houses in the United States. The Sandwich Glass Manufactory in Massachusetts documented the creation of 273 nipple shells during the week of November 5, 1825.[14] These small items were usually made at the end of a batch in order to finish up the remaining pools of glass.

Feeding vessels have an even longer history than the two previous instruments. Some of the earliest feeding instruments include terracotta funnel-shaped vessels and anthropomorphic vases from Egypt dating from 3000 BC to 2000 BC.[15] Just like baby-bottles today, these vessels were used to directly feed infants. Similar to the nipple shell, these vessels were made of a wide variety of materials and took varying forms. The materials used include glass, ceramic, horn, pewter, and silver. Likewise, the most common form types included the horn, pap-boat, bubby-pot, and sucking bottles.[16] The boat or submarine shaped sucking bottles like the Winterthur example were primarily made of glass, ceramic, or silver. The glass boat shaped sucking bottles were usually from England or the United States and date to the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century.

The mouth pieces of older boat shaped sucking bottles were an extension of the rest of the vessel or had a big enough hole in which to insert a metal siphon, similar to wine bottle siphons except with a nipple at one end. This nursing bottle has a continuous body and mouthpiece with a miniscule hole in the center allowing the infant to feed directly from the bottle. Bottle designs started to incorporate attachable rubber nipples once vulcanized rubber was invented in 1844 and the first patent for a rubber nipple was issued in 1854.[17]

Feeding bottles were sometimes used in tandem with the breast pipe and the nipple shell, delivering the milk that the previous two instruments collected. More commonly, bottles were used to artificially feed a child. Artificial feeding meant giving an infant some type of food mixture that mimicked breast milk. The earliest known infant formula as seen today was not developed and patented until 1865 by Justus von Liebig in Germany.[18] Nevertheless, people have been feeding non-human milk or foods to infants as far back as 2000 BC.[19] The most common mixtures included cow, goat, or donkey milk. In one of the first chemical analyses of human milk and animal's milk in

L to r: Breast pipe, c. 1760. Maker unknown. Nipple shell, c. 1870. Maker unknown. Courtesy of Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library.

1760, Jean Charles Des-Essartz stated,

> A mixture of two parts of fresh cow's-milk, and one part of warm water approaches near to the nature of human milk than anything else that can be conveniently procured.[20]

There were several other recipes for infant food created, including panada. Panada recipes were usually home remedies for infant food consisting of bread and water. In an 1835 advice book, Margaret Moore recommended,

> Very thin barley, rice, or grit gruel, or panada made of good white bread and pure water, should form the intermediate meals, and varied according to circumstances.[21]

Of the objects to administer these foods, the sucking bottle was considered the best of all the feeding vessels for the health of the infant. An 1843 homeopathic medical treatise stated,

> In taking this milk or any other milk, not direct from the breast, the sucking-bottle should be used; because the exercise of the lungs in sucking is an excellent means of developing the lungs, and thereby promoting the child's health.[22]

While feeding bottles were traditionally used when a mother could not breastfeed her child, wet nurses were also available. The use of wet nurses and the use of feeding bottles to artificially feed has been a consistent debate over time. In relation to wet-nursing, some parents feared a

> greater risk which the child incurs of being maltreated and neglected, when submitted to the exclusive care of a wet-nurse, than when nursed artificially, under the immediate superintendence of a parent.[23]

There was also a long-held belief that a wet nurse would transmit her own health, complexion, and demeanor to the suckling infant. Therefore, it was of the utmost importance to choose a wet nurse with good qualities, a task that could be quite difficult to achieve. William P. Dewees encouraged in his 1825 medical treatise "where the choice lies between [the sucking bottle], and a hireling nurse, [you] should without hesitation give [the sucking bottle] preference."[24] Certain conditions made wet-nursing preferable to artificial feeding. In *A Treatise on the Diseases and Physical Education of Children* of 1841, John Eberle stated:

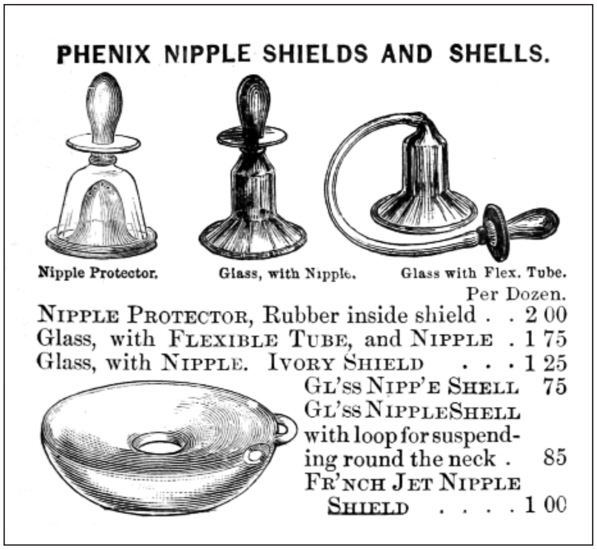
> Very young, and peculiarly delicate and feeble infants, seldom do well when raised by the hand. Fresh and wholesome milk from the breasts of the mother, or a healthy nurse, is almost indispensable to the well-being of an infant thus circumstanced. The same observations apply to infants, whose stomach and bowels are peculiarly weak and irritable, and consequently particularly liable to disorder, from even slight sources of gastro-intestinal irritation.25

After examining these objects, what can we learn about mothers and women in the nineteenth century? In Hugh Smith's 1801 text, *The Female Monitor,* he stated, "Nothing but a strange perversion of human nature could first deprive children of their mother's milk."[26] We see the same sentiment repeated in Margaret Jane Moore's 1835 text, *A Grandmother's Advice to Young Mothers on the Physical Education of Children*, when she stated breastfeeding was,

> a duty which requires no written law; a duty which is ever the same in all countries and in all ages; a duty respecting which there can be no difference of conscience, no speculative doubts; a duty, in short, which is pointed out by the Creator of all beings.[27]

Finally, in George H. Naphey's 1884 text, *The Physical Life of Woman*, he stated,

> So low down in the scale of creation as we can go... wherever there is a discoverable distinction of sex, we find that maternity is the first and most fundamental duty of the female.[28]



L to r: "Phenix Nipple Shields and Shells," as published in Whitall, Tatum & Co., Glass Manufacturers' trade catalogue, 1881. Courtesy of the Corning Museum of Glass. Sterling silver, glass and ivory nipple shields. Courtesy of the Wellcome Collection, London.

In each of these statements, motherhood is seen as the sacred duty of women, a duty that would only be denied by some mistake of nature or an uncaring or unmotherly woman. Yet these nursing glasses show that breastfeeding was not, and still is not, a simple task that every mother and child can easily do. The sheer volume of texts just from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries about the use of nursing glasses reflects this statement. This duty often came with annoyance and pain as the mother attempted to feed her child. As she is inundated with messages of her responsibility, she finds immense societal pressure to bring forth and care for the future people of the world. One can only imagine the anxiety and emotional pain she must feel when she has to use these nursing tools, objects that help in her endeavor yet subtly reflect a failure to perform what her body is meant to do. In this context, these nursing glasses represent the pressure and difficulty for women to be successful, responsible mothers.

However, this interpretation is only applicable to women who had access to these nursing glasses. Up until the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, this generally meant that these objects were only accessible to middle- and upper- class white women. Working class women and enslaved African American women had to find other means of breastfeeding support.

Usually, working class women would gain assistance from a local midwife. Martha Ballard, a midwife in Hallowell, Maine, recalled in her diary that spanned from 1785 to 1812 various remedies used to help mothers with engorged breasts or inflamed nipples.[29] In many cases, Martha would apply poultices of wheat bread, sorrel, or yellow lily roots to help numb the pain.[30] In some extreme cases, she would use a lancet to cut into the breast in order to discharge the milk.[31] Other midwives would use a puppy or an older infant to suck at the breast or would suck at the breast themselves in order to expel the milk.[32]

In the environment of American slavery, nursing glasses were denied by enslavers in order to capitalize on the bodies of enslaved women. Enslaved women were expected to return to work within three weeks of giving birth and were set with strict feeding arrangements that would result in the weaning of their baby within a year.[33] 1/5th of enslaved women who had recently given birth were used as wet nurses and caregivers for white offspring, typically breastfeeding these children for close to two years, all while being forced to neglect their own children.[34] As a health measure, some enslaved women drew from traditional West African practices by implementing community-based breastfeeding.[35] Infants would breast feed from multiple women to ensure their survival. Community-centered feeding was also implemented to aid the health of the mother since, just like their white counterparts, African American mothers suffered from perinatal illnesses, low milk production, and hardened, infected, or inflamed nipples. However, the regimented feeding enslavers enforced would not have allowed the use of nursing glasses, even if these mothers wanted to use them or had access to them.

This lack of accessibility to nursing glasses for working class and enslaved African American mothers adds another element to the interpretation of nineteenth century motherhood and femininity. These mothers faced pressure to be successful mothers similar to middle- and upper-class white women. However, unlike their counterparts, these mothers had additional problems that made successful motherhood harder to achieve. A lack of funds for working class mothers meant that they could not afford special tools to assist in breastfeeding, often relying on the help of a midwife. Meanwhile, enslaved African American mothers were often denied their motherhood care by their white enslavers. When they could not breastfeed their own children, they relied on their community to heal their bodies and help feed their children. By examining the various struggles of different mothers and their accessibility to nursing glasses, we see that in the nineteenth century there was no single way to be a mother and therefore, no single way to be a woman.

Examining the history, manufacturing, use, and denial of use of the breast pipe, nipple shell, and feeding bottle allows us to see that these are not simple sundries. For the white upper- and middle- class women who used these objects, they represented the physical difficulty of achieving success as a mother. Because women and motherhood were considered fundamentally the same by societal beliefs, these nursing glasses also represented what it meant to be a successful woman in the nineteenth century. For working class mothers and enslaved African American mothers who did not have access to these objects, they represent a measure of success as a mother and a woman that was not as achievable due to the factors of lived experiences. Rather, they had to redefine what success as a mother and woman was through the strategies they implemented to feed their infants. Therefore, the comparison of these nursing glasses and different women's accessibility to these objects reveals that there was no single way to be a mother and a woman in the nineteenth century and that the definition of a successful mother and woman changed with context.

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Notes

1. Breast Pipe, England or the United States, c. 1800-1860. Glass. Maker unknown, 1977.0112. Museum purchase. Nipple Shell, United States, c. 1850. Glass (non-leaded). Maker unknown, 1977.0107. Museum purchase. Nursing Bottle, United States, c. 1820. Glass. Maker unknown, 1957.0006. Gift of Richard T. French.
2. For good examples from different disciplines, see historian Jacqueline H. Wolf's *Don't Kill Your Baby: Public Health and the Decline of Breastfeeding in the 19th and 20th Centurie*s, anthropologist Bernice L. Hausman's *Mother's Milk: Breastfeeding Controversies in American Culture*, and feminist scholar Fiona Giles' *Fresh Milk: The Secret Life of Breasts*.
3. Joseph Laurie, *The parent's guide containing the diseases of infancy and childhood and their homeopathic treatment* (Philadelphia; New York; Boston; St Louis; Pittsburgh; Chicago; New Orleans: Philadelphia, Rademacher & Sheek; New York, Wm. Radde; Boston, Otis Clapp; St. Louis, J.G. Wesselhoeft; Pittsburgh, J.G. Backofen; Chicago, D.S. Smith; New Orleans, D.R. Luyties; 1854): 23. Available through: Adam Matthew, Marlborough. *Popular Medicine in America, 1800-1900*, http://www.popularmedicine.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/PM_112228_D.
4. N.A., *A Nurse's Guide* (London: printed for John Brotherton, at the Bible in Cornhill; and Lawton Gilliver, at Homer's Head, against St. Dunstan's Church Fleetstreet, 1729), 41-42.
5. A.E. Small, *Manual of Homoeopathic Practice* (Philadelphia: Rademacher & Sheek, 1856): 695.
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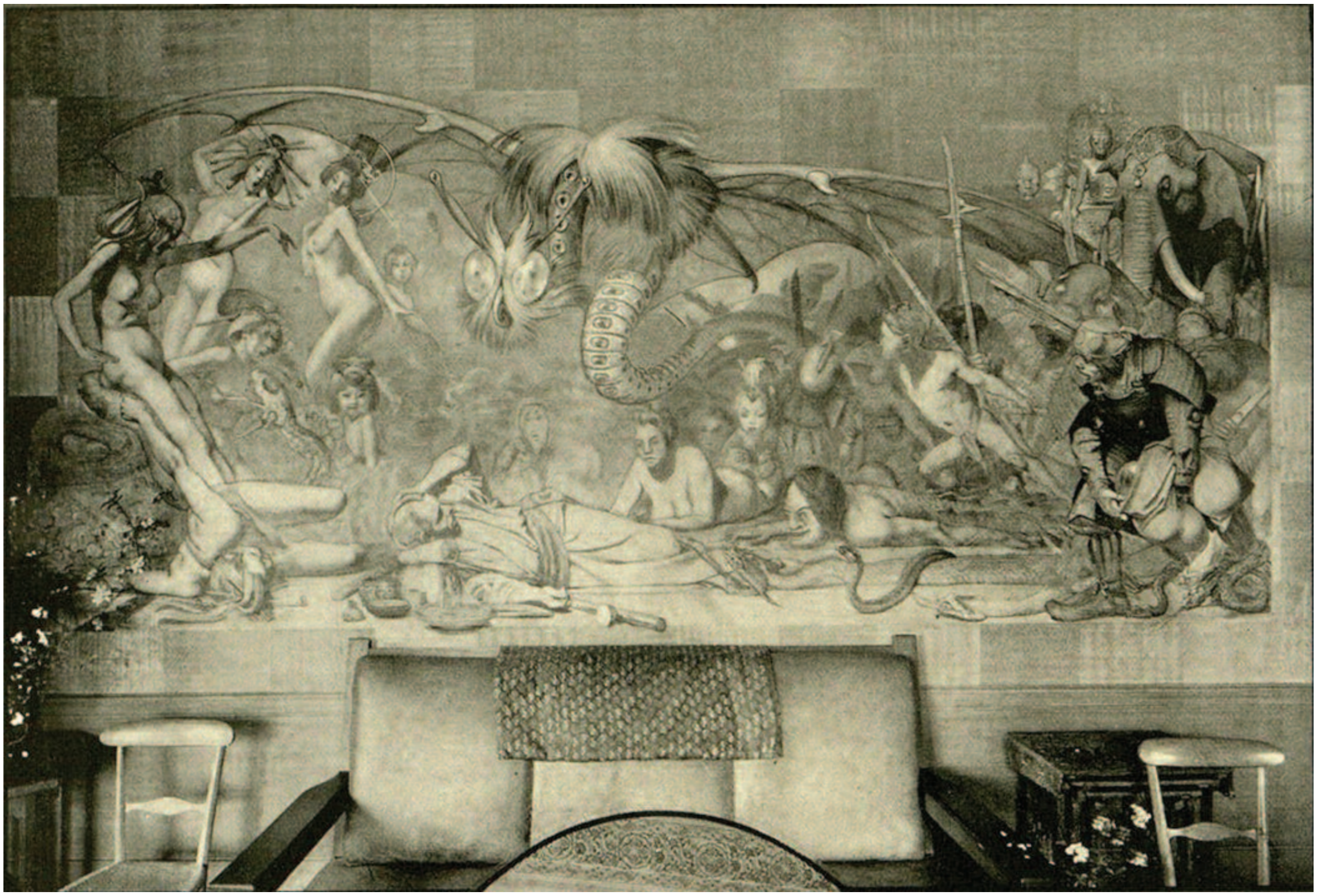
7. Nathaniel Tweedy, "A Fresh Supply of Drugs and Medicine" *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Oct. 3, 1765. 1; John Elliot, "For the Sale of Glass Ware," *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, Feb. 27, 1775, 3.
8. O.H. Needham, "Breast-Pump," 1854, U.S. Patent 11,135, issued June 20, 1854.
9. Samual Sloan, *On the Management of Nipples* (London: Printed by Savill, Edwards, and Co., 1873): 17.
10. George Denig, *The Domestic Instructor in Midwifery* (McConnellsburg, Pennsylvania, 1835): 54-55.
11. Michael Underwood, *A Treatise on the Diseases of Children with Directions for Management of Infants from the Birth* (Philadelphia: James Webster, 1818): 42.
12. C.H. Davidson, "Nursing Nipple," 1858, U.S. Patent 22,018, issued Nov. 9, 1858.
13. John Elliot, "For the Sale of Glass Ware," *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, Feb 27, 1775.
14. Raymond E. Barlow and Joan E. Kaiser, *The Glass Industry in Sandwich* Volume 5 (Atglen: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1999): 63.
15. Fildes, *Breasts, Bottles and Babies*, 320.
16. For photos and details on the various feeding vessels, see Valeria A. Fildes' *Breasts, Bottles and Babies: A History of Infant Feeding* p. 328-349.
17. Elijah Pratt, "Artificial Nipple," 1845, U.S. Patent 4,131, issued Aug. 4, 1845.
18. Emily E. Stevens, et al. "A History of Infant Feeding," *The Journal of Perinatal Education* 18, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 32-33.
19. Ibid., 32.
20. Jean Charles Des-Essartz, *Treatise of Physical Upbringing of Children* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, & Co., 1760): 28.
21. Margaret Jane Moore, *A Grandmother's Advice to Young Mothers on the Physical Education of Children: by M. J. Countess Dowager Mountcashell Revised and Augmented by the Author* (London: Baldwin and Cradock, 1835): 86-87.
22. John Epps, *Domestic homeopathy; or, Rules for the domestic treatment of the maladies of infants, children and adults and for the conduct and the treatment during pregnancy, confinement and suckling* (Boston: Otis Clapp, 1843): 146.
23. John Eberle, *A treatise on the diseases and physical education of children* (Philadelphia: Grigg & Elliot, 1841): 36.
24. William P. Dewees, *A treatise on the physical and medical treatment of children* (Philadelphia: H.C. Carey & I. Lea: 1825): 162.
25. John Eberle, *A treatise on the diseases and physical education of children*, 36.
26. Hugh Smith, *The Female Monitor, Consisting of a Series of Letters to Married Women on Nursing and the Management of Children…With Occasional Notes* (Wilmington: Peter Brynberg, 1801): 61.
27. Margaret Jane Moore, *A Grandmother's Advice to Young Mothers on the Physical Education of Children*, 29.
28. George H. Napheys, *The Physical Life of Woman: Advice to the Maiden, Wife and Mother* (Philadelphia: H. C. Watts & Co.. 1884): 243.
29. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1990): 196.
30. Ibid., 196-197.
31. Ibid., 113.
32. Valeria A. Fildes, *Breasts, Bottles and Babies: A History of Infant Feeding* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986): 141.
33. Wilma Dunaway, *The African-American Family in Slavery and Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 133-134.
34. Dunway, *The African-American Family in Slavery and Emancipation*, 139.
35. Sarah Turner, *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing and Slavery in Jamaica* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017): 125.



The Dream, c. 1907. As seen in “The Quest of Beauty,” by Louis C. Tiffany, published in *Harper’s Bazaar*, December 1917.

Louis Comfort Tiffany

AND THE MYSTERY OF *THE OPIUM DREAM*

Roberta A. Mayer

The Opium Dream, a strange and mesmerizing painting that is presently known as a printed illustration, was an expansive mural on thin canvas that originally hung in the smoking room of Laurelton Hall, the country estate of Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933) in Oyster Bay, Long Island. Tiffany was an easel painter throughout his life, and we know that he had a hand in touching up *The Opium Dream* after its installation, but there is no exhibition history, and it was not signed. In related printed material, Tiffany did not say much about the subject and did not take credit for the work as an artist (only as the photographer). Naturally, these omissions pique one's curiosity.

The present whereabouts of *The Opium Dream* is unknown, but, as noted above, it was photographed by Tiffany and was first published as a half-tone illustration in 1907.[1] A decade later, the mural was illustrated as *The Dream* in an article authored by Tiffany with the title "The Quest of Beauty."[2] When the mural was included in an insurance inventory in 1919, it was listed as *The Opium Smoker's Dream* and was valued at $1,000, making it one of the most expensive items in the smoking room.[3] Acknowledging the slight differences in the recorded titles, it will be referenced within this text as *The Opium Dream*.

Scholars have suggested that *The Opium Dream* could be a warning related to the use of opiates or, alternatively, an atypical rendering of a Buddhist story. These interpretations are not entirely satisfying. Moreover, neither addresses the key question of why Tiffany chose such a peculiar painting—the antithesis of beauty—to illustrate an article that he authored on the quest for beauty. There is an obvious contradiction between the illustration and the text.

The Opium Dream had its genesis in French orientalism, and in my view it was likely conceptualized as an amusing revelation of the psychological pressures behind Tiffany's relentless pursuit of beauty as a business endeavor. The smoking room mural conveyed Tiffany's attraction to nature and Asian exoticism not as a pleasurable dream, but as a fantastical hallucination or even a nightmare. Of course, a brilliant artistic concept is never a guarantee of a successful outcome, and there must have been projects that sparked anxiety, not only for Tiffany, but also the many artists and artisans who worked for him at Tiffany Studios. The painting, therefore, was not meant to be conventionally didactic, but instead a conversation piece suffused with personal symbolism. It is also tempting to speculate that it was not attributed or signed because it was painted in collaboration with other artists.

The Smoking Room Mural

In 1907, Tiffany's photograph of *The Opium Dream* appeared as an illustration in an article by Samuel Howe titled, "The Dwelling Place as an Expression of Individuality."[4] Howe offered no discussion of this work, but the caption was, "The Smoking Room with its Fantastic Decoration: "The Opium Dream."" A few months later, a reporter for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* visited and observed:

> ...there is a smoking room of sombre [sic] hue, where armors hang upon the walls and where one side of the room is taken up completely by a costly picture entitled "The Opium Fiend's Dream." It is Oriental and shows the drug stupefied victim lying on the floor, surrounded by a dozen of Oriental women, who are lavishing their affection on him.[5]

In each instance, the creator of the mural was unnamed.

The central figure of the "costly picture" was at the bottom of the canvas—a reclining bearded male in a kimono holding a Chinese opium pipe in his right hand and resting his head on a pillow. The left arm was active, a common pictorial device used to visually distinguish a state of sleep from death. On the floor around him were other recognizable opium paraphernalia, including a lamp and bowls. The "dragon" hovering above was a hybrid of moth, bat, and cobra. To the left, rising out of a smoky haze, were several seductive, nude women coiffed as geisha. A contorted body rested at their feet. To the right was an elephant, as well as an entourage of warriors, including a Japanese samurai and semi-nude spear bearer. There were snakes and an anthropomorphic creature with a kabuki mask along the floor. These exotic beings collectively focus on the "drug stupefied victim." Even in the poor-quality reproduction, the mural conveyed a bizarre spectacle, with some creatures recalling those seen in the work of Hieronymus Bosch. There is nothing comparable to it from Tiffany's entire catalogue of paintings, and especially not from his murals.

When an image of *The Opium Dream* was first published, Tiffany was internationally famous as a decorative artist. His earlier success as an ambitious and accomplished easel painter was largely forgotten. Although Tiffany would soon begin to show his paintings again, he had let that part of his public artistic persona lapse for more than a decade, a period in which he was consumed by the demands of running a complex business, creating Laurelton Hall, and managing time for his family. Tiffany had stopped exhibiting with the Society of American Artists in 1892. Then, after 1893, a year marked by his spectacular success at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Tiffany did not send paintings to the National Academy of Design, the American Water Color Society, or the Century Association for nearly fifteen years; these organizations had been his regular venues for more than two decades. He did send work to the Lotos Club in New

York City and the Newton Club in Newtonville, Massachusetts, in 1896, but then the exhibition records for his paintings cease until 1907 when he sent *Rivals* (also known as *Rivals for Beauty* and *The Peacock*) to the National Academy of Design.[6] *Rivals*, which will be mentioned again shortly, depicted a generalized female nude posed with a peacock and a butterfly. So, in 1907, as he began to exhibit his paintings again, Tiffany took full credit for *Rivals* and left the origins of *The Opium Dream* entirely open to speculation.

In 1917, when Tiffany published "The Quest of Beauty" for *Harper's Bazaar*, it included three reproductions of photographs of Laurelton Hall—a sculpture of a seminude nymph on a cockleshell that was part of an outdoor water installation, the Fountain Court, and the smoking room mural with the sanitized tile of *The Dream*.[7] In the article, Tiffany stated:

> Years ago when I was a youngster I might have ventured to define beauty. As a student, filled with the pleasure of talking about it, I had plenty to say. To-day I hardly know where to begin, for there is beauty everywhere, in everything. It is a mental attitude.[8]

He then went on to highlight some of the grounds and the architecture of Laurelton Hall, and he recalled an example of a picturesque scene that he had once witnessed on an early foggy morning in lower Manhattan. The article was only two pages in length and the illustration of *The Dream* was placed across the top third of the second page. It demanded visual attention. Yet, Tiffany did not specifically mention the smoking room mural in his text.

One must wonder whether he was teasing his readers. Why did he choose this highly unusual and counterintuitive work to illustrate his essay on the quest of beauty? After all, he could have selected *Rivals*, which as noted earlier was exhibited the same year that *The Opium Dream* was first published. *Rivals* clearly alluded to conventional ideas of beauty and would have been a natural complement to the illustration of the garden nymph sculpture. *The Opium Dream*, however, may have been meant to align with a few later sentences in the article:

> In greater or lesser degree, beauty is within the reach of everybody. The struggle for attainment is certainly tremendously entertaining, and if we cannot actually reach our goal, that is, reproduce an entertaining dream, we can at least help others on the way.[9]

In other words, Tiffany seems to suggest that *The Opium Dream* was supposed to be amusing, thus de-emphasizing any aspects of the mural that must have seemed strange to some readers. It is also noteworthy that Tiffany uses the terms "we" and "our" in this passage because these imply some sort of group effort.

Not only did Tiffany publish *The Opium Dream* twice, but many experienced it while visiting Laurelton Hall. Some complained that it could be seen by children because it was visible from the dining room. Even Tiffany's teenage daughter, Dorothy, found it upsetting, and she later recalled that it was filled with "dreadful creatures and abnormal humans in grotesque positions, sadistically mutilated, dripping blood and vividly colored."[10]

Tiffany apparently repainted a portion of the canvas at some point in response to his detractors, changing the smoke from the hookah into a flowing cloud.[11] The fact that he felt comfortable in touching up the composition suggests that he did have a hand in its creation, even though it is unlike any of Tiffany's other known paintings or murals.

Tiffany's Known Mural Paintings

There are many examples of Tiffany's commercial mosaic murals in both public and private spaces. In his book *Mural Painting in America* (1913), Edwin Howland Blashfield (1848-1936) cited the Tiffany Chapel in the Crypt of St. John the Divine in New York City.[12] Tiffany's dazzling mosaic mural of Maxfield Parrish's *The Dream Garden* was created in 1915-16 and was installed in the Curtis Building in Philadelphia in 1917. Tiffany's known painted murals are far fewer and easily align with standard notions of beauty.

Tiffany's first documented mural painting, published in 1882 and visibly signed, was a harvest scene of pumpkins, corn stalks, and a male "tom" turkey in full display. Now lost, it once hung in Tiffany's dining room in the Bella Apartment and was featured as an example of his offerings as a newly minted artistic decorator.[13]

In 1888, Tiffany's *Blossoms of Spring* (also known as *Spring*), an allegorical mural in highly keyed pastel hues, attracted much attention at the National Academy of Design, especially since it was priced at the extraordinary sum of $3,500.[14] The painting depicts women and children bringing their offerings to Flora, the Roman goddess of flowers, fertility, and spring.

In 1900, Tiffany's *Autumn* (also known as *Ceres*) appeared in the background of a published photograph of Tiffany's 72nd Street studio.[15] This large canvas, now lost, featured Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture, fertility, and motherly love, seated high on an ox drawn chariot amid an adoring entourage in front of a temple dedicated to the Roman god Jupiter (Ceres's brother). The models for Tiffany's *Blossoms of Spring* and *Autumn* came from Tiffany's circle of friends and family. Both murals had been installed in his upper floor dining room in the 72nd Street house in New York City. Both were later moved to the Third Floor Gallery of Laurelton Hall and were clearly ascribed to Tiffany.[16]

Louis Comfort Tiffany's dining room, 48 East 26th Street, New York City. As published in *Artistic Houses*, 1883.

Tiffany's most ambitious painted mural was *The Spirit of the Flowers*, created around 1917 using hired models and valued at $10,000.[17] It was on view in the Picture Gallery of Laurelton Hall, an early nineteenth-century house once known as Oak Openings that Tiffany had remodeled as an art gallery.[18] It, too, is now lost

Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933), *Spring* (*Blossoms of Spring*), 1888. As published in *The Art Work of Louis C. Tiffany* by Charles de Kay, 1914.

and only partially documented in a period photograph. Based on what is visible, it depicted a riverbank with mature trees and a multitude of allegorical figures.

The major point is that *Autumn*, *Spring*, and *The Spirit of the Flowers* were decorative, allegorical murals that Tiffany clearly acknowledged as his. As stated earlier, *The Opium Dream* was recorded as "not signed."

A Quest for Meaning

Michael Burlingham, Tiffany's great-grandson, likened Tiffany at the height of his artistic powers to "Kubla Khan," a reference to a poem that Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) had begun after an opium dream and then never finished.[19] There can be little doubt that Tiffany had also encountered opium in the cafes of Morocco, Egypt, and Algeria, and perhaps Paris. In these spheres, it was not an illegal substance, and the general subject was fitting for a gentleman's smoking room. Burlingham also commented on Tiffany's surge of creative energy following his enormous inheritance, and he paralleled Tiffany's building of the Laurelton Hall estate with Kubla Khan's pleasure-dome in Xanadu.[20]

As for meaning of *The Opium Dream*, Burlingham speculated that the painting offered a warning on the perils of "chasing the dragon."[21] In this context, the female figures at the left could have represented the life of a prostitute, transitioning from an innocent child to a promiscuous woman, and ultimately to a premature death, while on the right were hallucinations associated with withdrawal.[22] This interpretation seems possible, but was this painting truly conceptualized as an admonition of drugs? Maybe that was its effect on children, but probably not on sophisticated adults who moved in artistic and theatrical circles.

In her analysis of *The Opium Dream*, Julia Meech noticed that the reclining male could be a portrait of Tiffany.[23] It does bear a resemblance. Moreover, Tiffany appears to have included a self-portrait at the far left of his mural of *Autumn*. So, the idea that Tiffany was cast as the model for the opium dreamer is not far-fetched. Meech then suggested that the scene might be based on the Buddhist tale of the demon Mara and his seductive daughters who attempted to thwart Prince Siddhartha's quest for enlightenment. At the same time, she regarded the scene as a "goofy" interpretation—an assessment that seems quite apt since the prince's experience was not drug induced, but instead came during meditation. Meech, therefore, was hesitant to draw a definitive conclusion.

Burlingham and Meech rightly saw that Tiffany was the main subject of *The Opium Dream*, but neither tied the composition to other paintings that Tiffany certainly knew, including *The Nightmare* (1781) by Henri Fuseli (1741-1825), a romantic interpretation of a woman's frightening experience of laudanum, an opium tincture. Likewise, *The Opium Dream* closely recalls the drug-induced dream paintings of the French artists Achille Zo (1826-1901) and Jean Lecomte du Nouÿ (1842-1923). Zo studied with Thomas Couture and exhibited *Le Rêve d'un Croyant* (c. 1870) at the Paris Salon of 1870.[24] The painting depicted an opium dream of dance and physical pleasure that was based on the Islamic vision of paradise awaiting the true believer, and it was familiar through prints. Lecomte du Nouÿ was a student of Jean-Léon Gérôme, and his *A Eunuch's Dream* was inspired by Charles Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721). Here, Nouÿ shows a

Jean Lecomte du Nouÿ (1842-1923), *A Eunuch's Dream*, 1874. Courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art.

eunuch and his opium dream of a sensuous harem slave who was his object of unrequited love.

There is no doubt that Tiffany's *The Opium Dream* was conceived in the spirit of Fuselli, Zo, and Nouÿ. At the same time, since the "opium fiend" bore a resemblance to Tiffany, the painting invites a personal explanation especially since Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) had sparked international interest in the subject. The mural of Tiffany's dream was ripe for analysis.

Decorative Arts and Artistic Collaboration

As a fine artist, Tiffany was the sole master of his work in oil, watercolor, and pastel. He often did not date his paintings, though he typically signed these pieces. As a decorative artist, however, Tiffany worked with teams of artists, designers, and artisans to complete large custom commissions, as well as luxurious decorative objects. There was a clear hierarchy of skill and responsibility among Tiffany's employees, but the business was predicated on successful collaboration and teamwork in the design and subsequent execution of complex projects.

Tiffany and members of his team each contributed compositional elements in the development of a design idea at times. As Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen has recently discovered, Tiffany and Agnes F. Northrup (1857-1953) both signed a watercolor drawing of the late 1890s that conceptualized a window for Burrwood, the Long Island home of Walter Jennings (1858-1933), an heir to one of the founders of Standard Oil. Tiffany signed below the central allegorical image of the four seasons, and Northrup, best known for her flowers and landscapes, signed on the edge of her floral border at the lower left corner.[25] This kind of collaboration was also done by Northrup and Frederick Wilson (1858-1932), Tiffany's leading figurative artist.

As with these joint designs, *The Opium Dream* does not appear to have been created by a single hand. This may be why the mural was neither signed nor ascribed to anyone in the 1919 inventory. Some elements, especially the dragon-like animal, appear cartoonish, while others are tight and studied. The seminude male warrior standing closest to the hybrid creature displays the hallmarks of academic training in its reference to the famous *Borghese Gladiator* now at the Louvre Museum, a Hellenistic sculpture that was rigorously studied from plaster casts in numerous art academies. Likewise, the female nudes are far more anatomically detailed, animated, and contorted than the nudes that appear in Tiffany's other murals. As recalled today by Tiffany's descendants, Tiffany was responsible for the idea of *The Opium Dream*. The stylistic variations support the conclusion that it was executed collaboratively with the artists of Tiffany Studios.[26] For this mural, it is likely that Tiffany was part artist and part art director.

An Insider's Perspective

Tiffany's quest for beauty, the aesthetic sensation of pleasure, drew heavily on the flora and fauna of nature. It also took him to exotic locales and alluring landscapes in North Africa. Although Tiffany never went to India, his former business partner, Lockwood de Forest (1850-1932), spent his career importing East Indian woodcarving and decorative arts to New York City, and Tiffany used these elements in his designs.[27] Likewise, Tiffany collected Asian art, including Japanese military objects, such as samurai sword guards and armor.[28] And later in his career, Tiffany embraced the subject of the idealized female nude.

The quest for beauty, however, was also Tiffany's business motto, and the manifestation of artistic beauty could be a fraught endeavor, an experience that was well known to Tiffany, as well as his employees. In the mural, the depicted dream delves into the anxieties surrounding his pursuits. The female nudes are leering seductresses. The powers of nature have unleashed a hybrid monster with glowing insect eyes—his beloved dragonfly motif has become a threatening dragon. An approaching army with Japanese samurai, a maharaja's elephant, and a Tibetan buddha is also conjured within this hallucinogenic dream, Tiffany's sources of beauty—the female nude, nature, and the exotic—have morphed into something ugly and menacing. And all these surreal creatures want his attention, each one challenging him with the task of extracting their essence of beauty for a fickle and critical art market. The depiction of Tiffany's task is at once daunting and comical.

It should be noted that Tiffany's humor could be found in other elements of the smoking room, specifically the fireplace hood that was moved from the 72nd Street house to Laurelton Hall at some point after 1919. In her analysis, Jennifer Perry Thalheimer noticed that the iron hood contained references to a woman's stockinged leg and boot, a risqué motif that could be associated with the entertainment venues of Paris.[29] Like the female nudes of *The Opium Dream*, this, too, signaled that the smoking room was mainly for a male audience of Tiffany's peers.

In the end, the smoking room mural was not only a French-inspired painting of an opium dream, but it was also a tongue-in-cheek rendering reflecting Tiffany's perpetual quest for beauty as a powerful addiction that could not be suppressed, and which was at times a veritable nightmare, not just for him, but also for the many artists tasked with the job of bringing his inspired visions to life on deadline and within budget. The quest for beauty was Tiffany's personal calling, rooted in idealism and yet fraught with anxiety as well as the risk of reputational failure. The smoking room mural was almost certainly a collaborative project allowing several artists to playfully imagine the depths of Tiffany's hidden fears. In specifically choosing *The Opium Dream* to illustrate his article on the quest for beauty, Tiffany not only offered his readers a puzzling interpretative challenge, but he also shared a glimpse behind the curtain of his artistic process.

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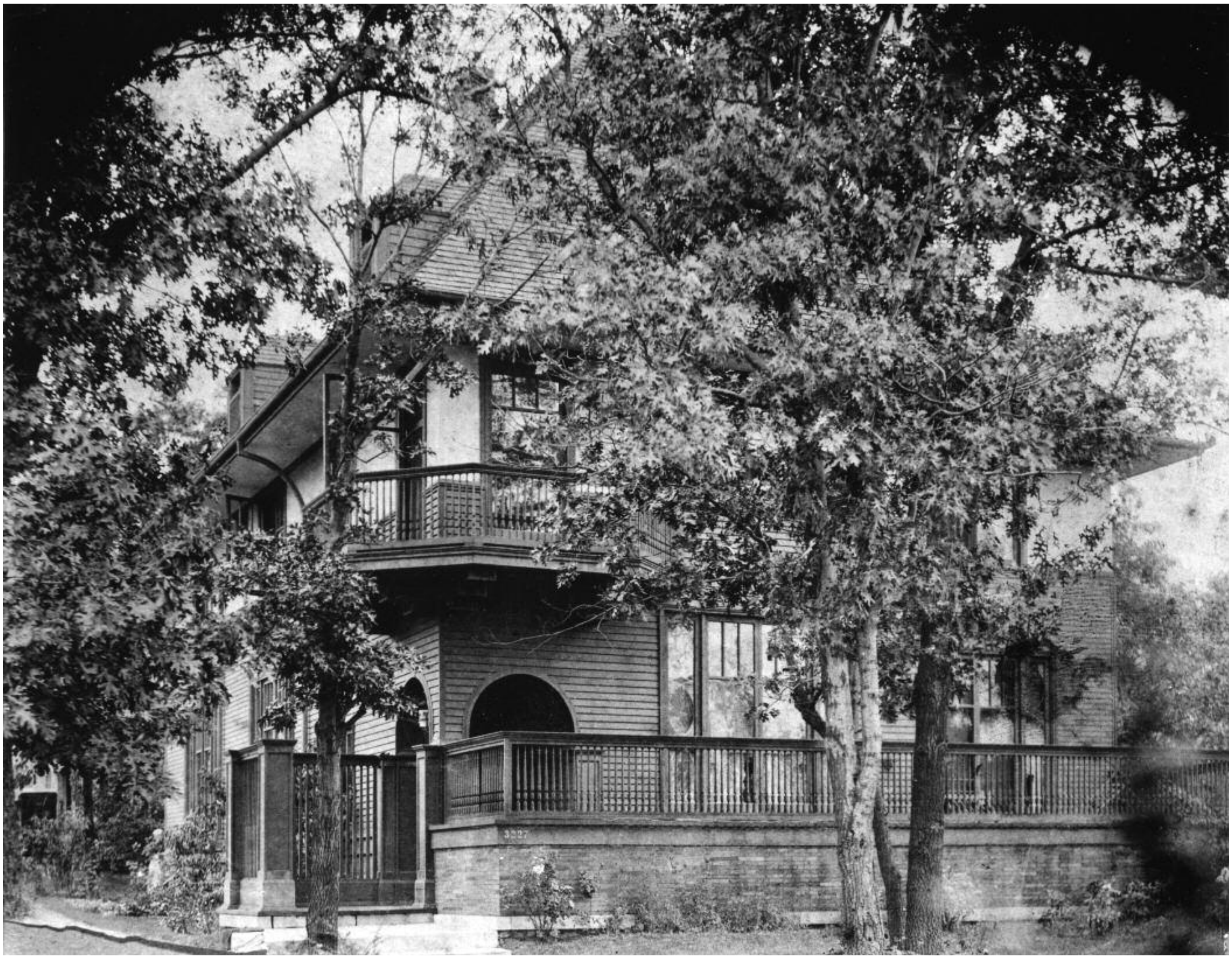
Notes

1. Samuel Howe, "The Dwelling Place as an Expression of Individuality: The House of Louis C. Tiffany," *Appleton's Magazine* 9 (February 1907), 165.
2. Louis C. Tiffany, "The Quest of Beauty," *Harper's Bazaar* 52 (December 1917), 44.
3. Laurelton Hall Insurance Inventory, 1919, Smoking Room, Mural painting, "The Opium Smoker's dream" on thin canvas. 6-6 x 14-3 not signed. Collection of the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, Winter Park, Florida.
4. Howe, "The Dwelling Place," 156–65.
5. "Rare Hanging Gardens on L.C. Tiffany Estate," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 27, 1907, 18.
6. "National Academy Holding Its Show," *New York Herald*, March 17, 1907, 3; [Charles de Kay], *The Art Work of Louis C. Tiffany* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1914), 8B; Exhibition of Water Colors by Louis C. Tiffany at the Louis C. Tiffany Foundation Gallery, 65 East 56th Street, New York City, February 4–25, 1922, no. 59.
7. Louis C. Tiffany, "The Quest of Beauty," 44.
8. Louis C. Tiffany, "The Quest of Beauty," 43.
9. Ibid.
10. Michael Burlingham, *The Last Tiffany: A Biography of Dorothy Tiffany Burlingham* (New York: Atheneum, 1989), 115.
11. Ibid.
12. Edwin Howland Blashfield, *Mural Painting in America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 266-67. The Tiffany Chapel is today in the Collection of the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, Winter Park, Florida.
13. Donald G. Mitchell, "From Lobby to Peak," *Our Continent* 1 (February-June 1882), 117-18.
14. "The Corridor," *National Academy Notes including the Complete Catalogue of the Spring Exhibition, National Academy of Design*, No. 8 (1888), 108-10; "Flowers in Decoration," *Decorator and Furnisher* 12 no. 3 (June 1888), 100.
15. "The Most Artistic House in New York City," *Ladies' Home Journal* 17 no. 12 (November 1900), 13.
16. Laurelton Hall Insurance Inventory, 1919, Third Floor Gallery. Mural painting, "Autumn" 8-2 x 6-6. Mural painting "Spring" 4-11 x 7-11. By Louis C. Tiffany. Combined value $5,000. Removed from Dining Room 72nd St. House. Collection of the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, Winter Park, Florida.
17. Laurelton Hall Insurance Inventory, 1919, Picture Gallery, Oil Paintings, "The Spirit of the Flowers," 84 x 144, $10,000. not numbered (follows no. 51). Collection of the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art, Winter Park, Florida; Louis Comfort Tiffany to Edwin Howland Blashfield, December 12, 1916. Edwin Howland Blashfield Papers, MS 61, Series 1, Box 3, New-York Historical Society Museum and Library, New York, New York. My thanks to Eve Kahn for this reference.
18. Jennifer Perry Thalheimer, "For the Advancement of Art: The Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation," in Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, *Louis Comfort Tiffany and Laurelton Hall: An Artist's Country Estate* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 209; see also John Kimberly Mumford, "The Year at the Tiffany Foundation," *Arts & Decoration* 14 (February 1921), 273.
19. Burlingham, The Last Tiffany, 106.
20. Ibid.
21. Burlingham, *The Last Tiffany*, 115.
22. Tiffany may have been familiar with Harry Hubell Kane, *Opium-Smoking in America and China: A Study of its Prevalence, and Effects, Immediate and Remote, on the Individual and the Nation* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1882).
23. Julia Meech, "Tiffany's Collection of Asian Art at Laurelton Hall," in Frelinghuysen, *Louis Comfort Tiffany and Laurelton Hall*, 161.
24. J. Goujon, *Beaux-Arts Salon de 1870* (Paris: H. Carion, 1870), 132, no. 2985.
25. Louis Comfort Tiffany and Agnes Northrup, *Four Seasons*, c. 1897-99. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 67.654.317, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/16761.
26. Personal communication with Timo Platt.
27. Roberta A. Mayer, *Lockwood de Forest: Furnishing the Gilded Age with a Passion for India* (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2008).
28. Meech, "Tiffany's Collection of Asian Art at Laurelton Hall," 157-75.
29. [Jennifer Perry Thalheimer], "Orientalist Dream in Iron," *Insider: Newsletter from the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art* (Fall 2020), 4-9.

Frank Lloyd Wright's Berry-MacHarg House Revealed

Gregory M. Brewer



The Berry-MacHarg house, Chicago, Illlinois. Adler & Sullivan; Frank Lloyd Wright, architect. Courtesy of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York.

Among the most elusive of Frank Lloyd Wright's early works is the Berry-MacHarg house of 1891, believed to have been designed by Wright while working for Adler & Sullivan. The Berry-MacHarg house was for many years thought to be the first of Wright's "bootleg" houses, those independent commissions undertaken by Wright while still employed by Adler & Sullivan.[1] However, we can now say with certainty that it was an Adler & Sullivan commission which Wright later claimed as his own.[2]

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) was employed by Adler & Sullivan for approximately five years from early 1888 until June 1893. During this time, he was assigned to work on several of the firm's relatively few residential commissions, including summer houses for James Charnley and Louis Sullivan himself in Ocean Springs, Mississippi (1890), the principal residence of James Charnley in Chicago (1891), and a townhouse intended for Sullivan's mother commissioned by his brother Albert Sullivan (1892). Like the Berry-MacHarg house, Wright later claimed each of these works as entirely or largely his own, although all were done for the firm under the direction of Sullivan. Stylistically, the Berry-MacHarg house seems more closely related to Wright's independent work of the early 1890s than to other work of Adler & Sullivan.

Still, the story of the Berry-MacHarg house remains far from complete. No drawings for the project have survived, and until now the house has been known from only a single photograph. Even the identity and relationship of the clients has remained the subject of confusion. While generally known as the W.S. MacHarg house, the commission was announced by Adler & Sullivan as a residence for Dr. C.H. Berry and is now properly referred to as the Berry-MacHarg house. New biographical and building permit research and the discovery of a previously unknown photograph reveal long hidden details of this early Wright design.

Presented here for the first time is only the second known photograph of the Berry-MacHarg house. The house appears in a real-photo postcard view published by Charles R. Childs (1875-1960) circa 1907.[3] Childs was a prolific photographer of Chicago neighborhoods in the early years of the twentieth century. It is estimated that the C.R. Childs Company produced between twenty-five and forty thousand real-photo postcard views of Illinois towns and cities and various locations in Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa.[4] The Chicago History Museum has nearly ten thousand C.R. Childs images in its collection, but the postcard showing the Berry-MacHarg house is not among them.[5] The image reproduced here was discovered in the personal collection of LeRoy Blommaert, a resident historian of Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood and an authority on the work of C.R. Childs.

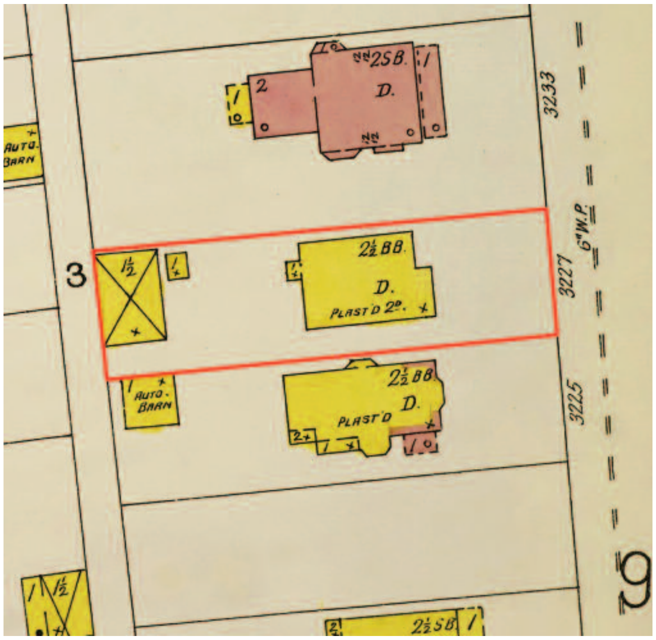
Childs was not an architectural photographer and the Berry-MacHarg house is not the subject of the photo. It just happens to be there. The postcard shows the west side of Beacon Street looking south from near Leland Avenue.[6] The line of sight is directly south along the sidewalk, making the photo feel oddly off balance, like looking at just one side of a panoramic view.

The previously known photograph, a glass plate of which is housed in the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives at the Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library of Columbia University, shows a partial view of the front of the house taken from the southeast. This view shows the low entry terrace with its foundation wall of Roman brick topped by a wooden balustrade with closely spaced slender balusters; the recessed corner entrance with its two arched openings, one on each face of the building; an octagonal balcony with a matching balustrade directly above the entrance; and the steeply pitched shingled hip roof with multiple dormers. The exterior is faced with narrow clapboards up to the second story sill height. The upper wall and overhanging soffit are stuccoed.

The Berry-MacHarg house, c. 1907. Charles R. Childs Real-Photo Postcard no. 1617. Courtesy of LeRoy Blommaert.

The newly discovered C.R. Childs photo provides a similar view of the house from the northeast. Through the foliage, a glimpse of the front terrace and arched entry can again be seen, but in this view we also see the projecting mass of the southeast corner, the full height of the main roof, and the central brick chimney. This confirms the building footprint as shown on the 1905 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*. The C.R. Childs photo seems to indicate a greater variation in color than is apparent in the previously known photo, although these slight differences in grayscale value tell us little about the actual colors used.

The C.R. Childs postcard also provides neighborhood context



The Berry-MacHarg house, (property boundary added by author)
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1905, Vol. 7, plate 90.

lacking in the earlier tightly cropped photo. Sixteen years after being platted, the street is surprisingly lush with a variety of trees and plantings. The yellow brick house built in 1904 shown at right, with its broad front porch and stone foundation wall, still stands.

Early chroniclers of Wright's work paid scant attention to the identity of William Storrs MacHarg (1847-1910), who is commonly described in Wright literature as a plumbing expert or contractor who had worked for Adler & Sullivan.[7] He was in fact a prominent consulting engineer specializing in sewer and water treatment systems. MacHarg was a close associate of Daniel Burnham, and from 1891 to 1893, the period during which the house was designed and built, he was the chief engineer in charge of water supply, sewerage, and fire protection systems for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.[8] In 1893, MacHarg joined the inaugural faculty of the Chicago School of Architecture, a combined enterprise of the Art Institute of Chicago and the newly formed Armour Institute, as a lecturer in sewerage and ventilation.[9] MacHarg and two other early Wright clients, Edward C. Waller and William H. Winslow, later became partners in the Luxfer Prism Company, a venture in which they also involved Wright.[10] W.S. MacHarg lived in the house from its completion in 1892 until his death in 1910.[11]

Dr. Charles Hazard Berry (1842-1902) came to Chicago in 1882 where he established a successful business in home remedies, including a popular mercury-laced freckle cream. He traveled widely throughout Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa offering free consultations, followed, presumably, by his mail-order medications.[12] With the dawn of the electrical age, Berry promised the treatment and cure of virtually any ailment "with the latest and most approved electrical appliances [including] galvanic, faradic and static currents and electro-thermal bath, sinusoidal current ... and electro-magnetic induction cylinders."[13] Berry lived in the house from its completion in 1892 until 1898 when he married his second wife. He died four years later in 1902. The freckle cream that bore his name continued to be sold until the 1930s.

How did these two men who seem so unalike come to share a house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright? The answer is surprisingly simple but also unusual. Both men were graduates of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor where they met and married sisters. MacHarg and Berry were brothers-in-law bound together by a trio of unusually close sisters.

C.H. Berry graduated from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1868.[14] He married Mary L. Briggs (1847-unknown), a native of Ann Arbor, in 1869. The couple returned to Berry's hometown of Dover, New York, where they lived with his widowed mother and Berry began his medical practice.[15] Mary's older sister, Caroline C. Briggs (1844-1904), soon joined them in Dover.[16]

W.S. MacHarg graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in mining engineering, also in 1868.[17] He married Mary Berry's younger sister, Frances E. Briggs (1851-1935), in 1872. The MacHargs also lived in Dover for several years before relocating to Chicago in 1878 where W.S. MacHarg was at first employed as an assistant engineer with the Board of Public Works.[18]

The fate of Mary Berry is unknown, although it appears that she died sometime after June 1880, likely prompting Charles Berry and Caroline Briggs to move to Chicago in 1882.[19] In Chicago, Berry sometimes lived with Caroline Briggs and at other times with the MacHargs.[20] They may all have lived together as early as 1890, but in the spring of 1892, they all moved to the new Berry-MacHarg house on Beacon Street. The combined household at that time included Charles Berry, Caroline Briggs, Frances and William MacHarg, the MacHargs' four children, and most likely two servants. They would later be joined by two elderly widowed aunts of Caroline and Frances.[21]

The Berry-MacHarg house was located about six miles north of downtown Chicago in what is now called Uptown. The area was annexed to the city in 1889, and the plat for the Sheridan Drive subdivision that includes the Berry-MacHarg property was recorded in April 1891. C.H. Berry purchased two fifty-foot lots on Beacon Street for $6,000 that same month.[22] Adler & Sullivan announced their commission for a $10,000 residence for Dr. C.H. Berry three months later in October 1891.[23] Although Berry owned the property, it was surely MacHarg who selected Adler & Sullivan as their architect, so it is not surprising that Wright remembered the project as the MacHarg house.

A building permit for a two-story frame residence was issued December 2, 1891,[24] with a reported cost of $4,500.[25] A second building permit for a barn to be erected behind the house was issued February 9, 1892.[26] Construction was completed in the spring of 1892. The *Lakeside Directory of Chicago* published in June 1892 listed MacHarg's new home address as 3227 Beacon (now 4632 N. Beacon St.). Berry's home address was not listed that year, but he no doubt moved together with MacHarg from their previous joint residence, a rented rowhouse on Chalmers Place in Lincoln Park.

Berry left the joint household in June 1898 to marry his second wife, Mary Mills Lee (1862-1954). Several months later, in October 1898, he was the victim of a carriage accident that caused him permanent brain damage and partial paralysis, forcing him to give up his medical practice. Berry's last Chicago address was listed as 1161 N. Clark Street in 1899. That same year, the Berrys moved to Mary's former home in Columbia City, Indiana, where they lived with her widowed mother and widowed sister until Charles Berry's death in 1902.[27]

In September 1892, shortly after moving into the house, MacHarg entered into a five-year agreement with Berry to purchase the property for $13,000.[28] They renewed their agreement in April 1894.[29] These agreements essentially prohibited Berry from selling the property without MacHarg's approval. In early 1903, MacHarg engaged Louis Sullivan to design alterations to the front porch, but there is no evidence that the work was carried out.[30] The MacHargs eventually took title to the property in March 1904, two years after Berry's death.[31] MacHarg himself died in May 1910, and his widow, Frances, sold the property in December 1911.[32]

Unfortunately, the Berry-MacHarg house did not survive long enough to be rediscovered by the first generation of Sullivan and Wright scholars. Although many fine houses were built in the neighborhood during its early years, development quickly turned from single-family dwellings to multi-family flat buildings. The Berry-MacHarg house was demolished in 1926 and replaced by an apartment building that still stands.

Gregory M. Brewer is an independent scholar with a lifelong interest in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. He holds a Master of Architecture degree and a B.A. in the History of Architecture and Art, both from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Following his career as an architect with firms including Perkins & Will, NBBJ, and SOM, where he worked on large-scale projects in the U.S., Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, Greg is now focused on researching and writing about architecture. He is currently at work on a book about Frank Lloyd Wright's designs for cooperative communities in Michigan.

Notes

1. During his time with Adler & Sullivan, Wright took on at least ten independent commissions beginning with the A.W. Harlan house of 1891. The term "bootleg" as used to describe Wright's moonlighting work was apparently coined by Wright himself but never used by him in print. See: Grant Carpenter Manson, *Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910: The First Golden Age* (New York: Reinhold Publishing), 1958, 44.
2. Wright included the "McHarg [sic] Residence," incorrectly dated 1888, in a list of his work to date published in: *Frank Lloyd Wright, An Organic Architecture: The Architecture of Democracy* (London: Lund Humphries & Co. Ltd.), 1939, 30. Wright's list makes no distinction between his independent work and work for Adler & Sullivan.
3. The postcard is undated and unused, so there is no postmark to assist in dating; however, LeRoy Blommaert, the owner of the example illustrated here, estimates a date of 1907 based on postmarks found on earlier and later postcards in the numbered series.
4. LeRoy Blommaert, *This Is a Real Photograph: The Life and Work of Photographer Charles R. Childs* (Self-published), 2012.
5. Chicago History Museum, Charles R. Childs Postcard and Photograph Collection.
6. The caption on the postcard reads: "Beacon St. S. near Leland Av. Sheridan Park, Chicago, Ill. 1617." 1617 is the number of the postcard in the ongoing series.
7. Manson, 54.
8. William Storrs MacHarg, *Alumni Files, 1845-1978*, University of Michigan. Alumni Records, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.
9. "Chicago School of Architecture," *Inland Architect and News Record* XXII, no. 5 (December 1893), 48.
10. Waller and Winslow were company directors; MacHarg was credited with five of the company's numerous patents. See: Dietrich Neumann, "'The Century's Triumph in Lighting': The Luxfer Prism Companies and Their Contribution to Early Modern Architecture," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 54, no. 1 (March 1995), 24-53.
11. The *Lakeside Directory of Chicago* listed MacHarg's home address as 3227 Beacon (later renumbered as 4632 N. Beacon St.) from 1892 until 1909. MacHarg died prior to canvassing for the 1910 directory, although his widow, Frances E. MacHarg, continued to be listed at the same address.
12. A typical example of Berry's extensive laudatory advertising for his traveling consultations can be found in "Dr. C.H. Berry, The Great Chicago Specialist," *The Courier* (Waterloo, Iowa), June 1 1892, 1.
13. Advertisement, *The Chicago Chronicle*, March 22 1896, 22.
14. University of Michigan, and Harley Le Roy Sensemann, *Catalogue of Graduates, Non-graduates, Officers, and Members of the Faculties, 1837-1921* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: The University), 1923, 399.
15. 1870 U.S. Census, Dover Plains, Dutchess County, New York.
16. 1875 New York State Census, Dover, Dutchess County, New York.
17. University of Michigan, *Catalogue of Graduates, Non-graduates, Officers, and Members of the Faculties, 1837-1921*, 307.
18. MacHarg first appears in the *Lakeside Directory of Chicago* in 1882 where his occupation was listed as "asst. engineer Board of Public Works." His residence that year was listed as Highland Park, but in all subsequent years he resided in Chicago.
19. The last known reference to Mary L. (Briggs) Berry is in the June 1880 U.S. Census where she was living with her husband, sister, and mother-in-law in Dover Plains, Dutchess County, New York. No record of her death has been discovered, and no records from Berry's time in Chicago indicate that he was married.
20. The *Lakeside Directory of Chicago* listed Berry's address in 1886 as 747 N. Park, an address shared with MacHarg. From 1887 through 1889, Berry's address was listed as 24 Wisconsin, an address shared with Caroline Briggs, although Briggs, being an unmarried woman, was listed only sporadically. In 1890 and 1891, Berry's address was listed as 20 Chalmers Place, again an address shared with MacHarg. It seems likely that Briggs also lived with Berry and MacHarg on Chalmers Place.
21. This was the household as it appeared in the 1900 U.S. Census for Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.
22. Warranty Deed, Graceland Cemetery Company to Charles H. Berry, Doc. 1478336, Recorded 29 May 1891, Cook County, Ill.
23. "Among the Architects," *The Economist* VI (October 10 1891), 638.
24. Building permit no. 1341, 2 Dec 1891, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago Building Permits Digital Collection 1872-1954, Chicago Building Permit Ledgers Reel UID CBPC_LB_04, 264.
25. "Building Permits," *Chicago Tribune*, December 3 1891, 10. The notice incorrectly lists the owner as "C.H. Barry" and the location as "at Beacon on Lake Shore Drive."
26. Building permit no. 113, 9 Feb 1892, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago Building Permits Digital Collection 1872-1954, Chicago Building Permit Ledgers Reel UID CBPC_LB_05, 196.
27. A summary of Berry's second marriage and his subsequent misfortune is found in his obituary: "Death of Dr. Berry," *Garrett Clipper* (Garrett, Ind.), April 3 1902, 4.
28. Agreement, Charles H. Berry and William S. MacHarg, Doc. 1808967, Recorded 31 Jan 1893, Cook County, Ill.
29. Agreement, Charles H. Berry and Francis E. MacHarg, Doc. 2028814, Recorded 21 Apr 1894, Cook County, Ill.
30. Louis H. Sullivan to William S. MacHarg, 13 Apr 1903, *Copybook of Business Letters*, Sullivaniana Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, Art Institute of Chicago.
31. Warranty Deed, Caroline C. Briggs to Francis E. MacHarg, Doc. 2509551, Recorded 11 Mar 1904, Cook County, Ill.
32. Warranty Deed, Francis E. MacHarg to Joachim Graver, Doc. 4914524, Recorded 16 Feb 1912, Cook County, Ill.

The Missing Conservatory

Christopher Pollock

The conservatory, outbuildings and palm house at the Morton Freeman Plant estate, Branford House, Groton, Connecticut, c. 1905.

My interest in this conservatory started when I was a child growing up in 1960s Connecticut. Occasionally my parents would drive us by a large greenhouse in Rocky Hill on the way to the Veterans Hospital. This was no ordinary greenhouse, but was grandly scaled with a central dome structure of curved windows. The Connecticut River Valley had lots of functional greenhouses but nothing as exotic as this. In 1966 the conservatory made big news, not because of itself, but rather what was happening elsewhere on the property. A building was about to be constructed and during excavation there was an exciting subterranean find: dinosaur footprints—something unheard of in the state. This started a cascade of events that eventually ended with the property as a State Park to display the find. The public was informed that the greenhouse was to be taken apart and stored.

I decamped to California in 1979 and over the years my environmental design career veered toward architectural and cultural history, culminating in being appointed as the first Historian in Residence for the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department in 2016. One of the many treasures in the city's Golden Gate Park is the spectacular example of a Victorian greenhouse assembled by Lord and Burnham, the Conservatory of Flowers, which was the subject of an evaluation and rebuild that was completed in 2003. In 2022 I decided to use my accumulated training in historical research to find out what happened to the conservatory back in my home state. As with any such project, it became a series of layers to unwrap the structure's history, which had surprising roots of origin in another county.

The story starts with Morton Freeman Plant (1852-1918) who was born in Branford, Connecticut to Henry B. Plant and Ellen Blackstone Plant. Plant's father was chiefly in the railroad business in the southeastern United States. He died in 1899 and Morton, their only son, inherited $15 million. The younger transportation magnate immediately launched a building project to rival the "cottages" of Newport. The Plant's main residence was a 31-room Fifth Avenue mansion in New York City which had a couple of greenhouses for Morton's botanical interests.

Interior of the conservatory, c. 1905. Courtesy of the University of Connecticut Library, Archives and Special Collections.

In 1903 Plant announced that he would have a residence built in Groton, Connecticut, at an estimated cost of $250,000 and be constructed of the local Westerly granite.[1] It was on the spectacular site of Avery Point, (aka Eastern Point) located at the mouth of the Thames River, which faces Long Island Sound. The estate was named Branford House, remembering the Connecticut town where Plant was born and raised.

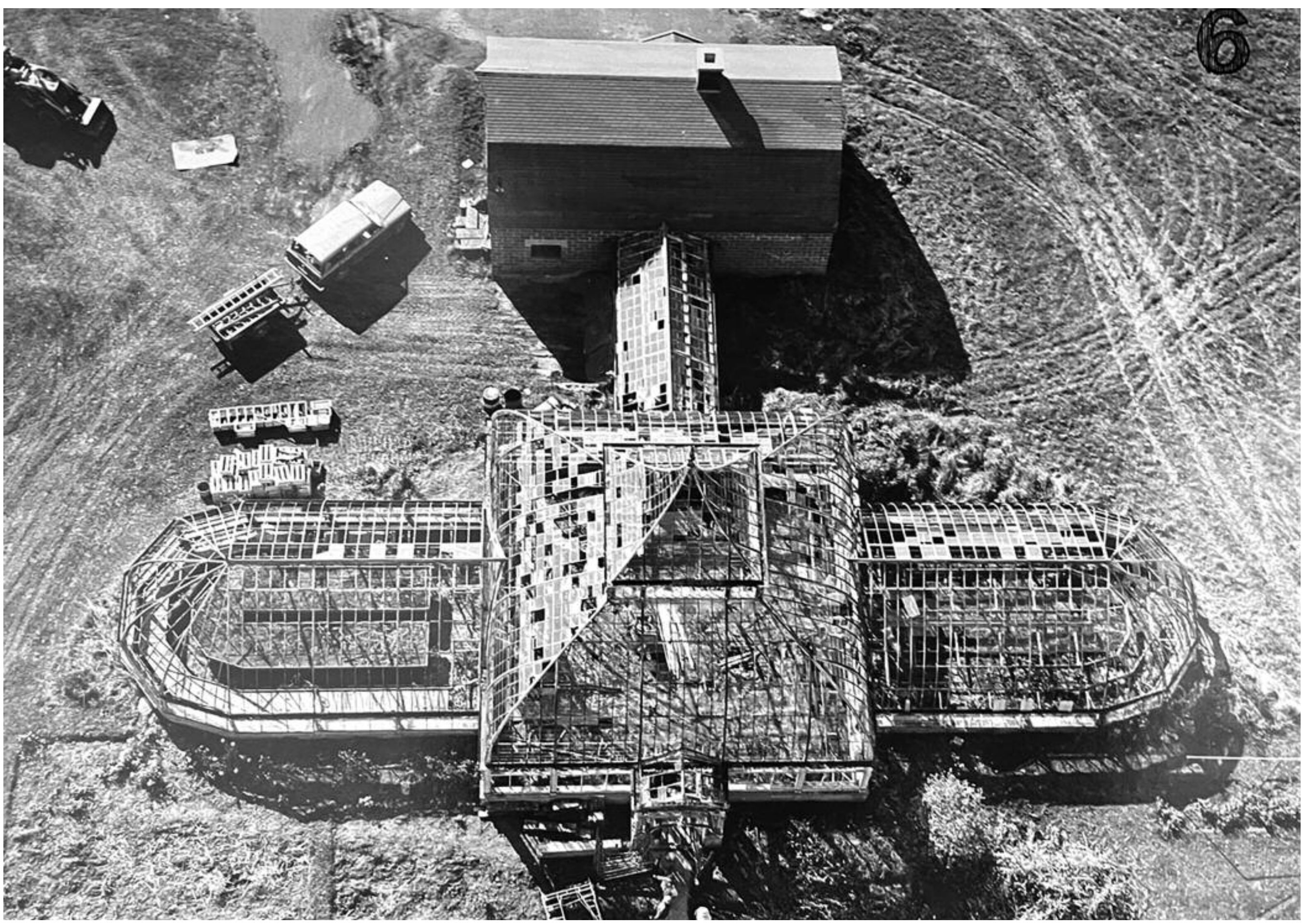
While Plant's wife Nellie (née Capron) spent her time creating the residence's lavish interiors, Morton spent his time developing the grounds that would become equally lavish. All their effort was spent on the residence that was used only a couple of months of the year.

When in Groton, Morton was a gentleman farmer, and his husbandry efforts were not small. Over time he developed the area north of the residence into a horticultural wonderland with a vast array of greenhouses and gardens. The greenhouses were provided by manufacturer Lord and Burnham and over time more large greenhouses were added to the scheme. Eventually there was more greenhouse square footage than many commercial nurseries had in the day. A 1907 mention spells out some of the estate's details: "In the greenhouses, peaches, nectarines, and Hamburg grapes are ripe and in the palm house there are orchids from India and South America of great rarity. [Also, on the property] there is an island for sheep, a farm for blooded cattle, and one for pheasants."[2]

The firm of Lord and Burnham, located in Irvington, New York was a one-stop manufacturer that provided the parts, heating system and work crews required to build a greenhouse. They were a well-known manufacturer in business since 1849 and provided greenhouse structures to many private estates and public parks. But they also provided hot houses for large commercial nurseries as well as to the other end of the spectrum: the emerging middle-class enthusiast. They had a wide vocabulary of modular designs that could be tailored to the most discriminating person who wanted a stunning conservatory. Anyone who could afford even a small greenhouse went to Lord and Burnham. Fine examples of their work are found across the United States and they are still in business.

After Plant's death in 1918,[3] the property passed through successive heirs over time. At the end of the Great Depression the property passed out of the family's hands to the State of Connecticut. In October 1941, an article reports that "the State plans to salvage, for use in some state institution, the extensive greenhouses…and the steam plant used to heat them."[4] In the throes of World War II, on November 18, 1941, full approval was given for the 44-acre Plant Estate to be purchased by the State of Connecticut for $85,000. The agreement then deeded use of the property to the U.S. Coast Guard as a training station for petty officers with an eventual enrollment of 1,600.[5] The mouth of the Thames River was an idea spot for maritime training. Much of estate's gardens and outbuildings, including some greenhouses were demolished, but the Palm House conservatory portion was saved.

On March 2, 1942 the Connecticut Commissioner of Public Works issued an invitation to bid on two related projects for the dismantling, marking, and packing of greenhouses on the former



Aerial view of the conservatory during the dismantling process, 1966. Groton, Connecticut. Courtesy of the *Hartford Courant*.

Plant Estate.[6] Within a month the Vermilya-Brown Company, a contractor headquartered New York City, was advertising for carpenters to work on the Avery Point site project to ready it for occupancy by the U.S. Coast Guard.[7] The Avery Point project came to the attention of Colonel Raymond F. Gates, commandant and Major John R. Stoddard, quartermaster, both of the Veterans' Home and Hospital located in Rocky Hill. They headed up the new campus that had been completed in 1940. Being a state-owned institution, they were able to secure the Palm House portion, the most interesting part of the otherwise functional greenhouses, and its original construction plans. Lord and Burnham were contracted to disassemble the structure, piece by piece–some 40 years after the venerable manufacturer had manufactured it and constructed it on the Groton site.[8]

The configuration of the salvaged conservatory was a formal plan consisting of a square central pavilion topped by an inward curving cupola and lower flanking wings with faceted ends. It was approximately 85' x 35' overall. Everything about the structure was bespoke. Its tripart plan, curved glass panes, pointed arch sections flanking the main pavilion with its raised inward curving roof–all cloaked in glass held by minimal iron frames. Additionally, there were operable glass panels, below and above, all operated from the plant bench level. The front doors of wood were particularly intricate with a raised panel below and reticulated mullion pattern above set with glass. (Most greenhouses had a plain standard French-style glass door.)

The parts were trucked to Veterans' Home and Hospital in Rocky Hill and their own construction crew reassembled the structure on the Connecticut State owned property at 286 West Street (State Route 411), Rocky Hill in Hartford County. The site was directly across West Street from the Veterans campus' main entry security gatehouse and was prominent to anyone driving on West Street.

For the first 10 years the re-erected conservatory sat idle, apparently, in part because it was not heated. But, in 1952 an auxiliary building was constructed to the east of the greenhouse with a connector to the greenhouse section. It included a boiler room to provide hot water radiation, a workshop, and storage.[9] Stylistically, the new building replicated a small Connecticut colonial gambrel-roofed house. The style choice was based on Colonial Revival, which was the basis of the Veterans adjacent campus architecture.

By the early 1960s the greenhouse was disused. With the conservatory's removal on their minds, the Veterans Home and Hospital Commission authorized the now presiding Commandant, Colonel Robert J. Beckwith to offer the greenhouse to the University of Connecticut in their meeting of February 2, 1966. Knowing that the building was in the crosshairs of removal, the issue of creating a state museum was floated in March 1966. The initial committee of five included Carl N. Otte, who was the open-space coordinator for the state Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The committee proposed that the eye-catching greenhouse in situ be a basis of a complex of buildings. The idea was to showcase Connecticut's history and display related objects.[10] In a due diligence move, several contacts made to place the structure elsewhere to no avail. An interdepartmental mail, dated August 25, 1966, was issued by Colonel Robert J. Beckwith who was now commandant of the Vets campus. He asked the Director of Purchasing, William H. Finnegan, about the schedule of removal of the structure. He noted "All of the so-called Historical Societies and local horticulturalists have long said it would be too expensive to remove or save."[11] On the very same day a coincidental and major event took place that sealed the fate of the greenhouse.

In August 1966, the State of Connecticut published a rendering of a one-story building that was to be constructed on the property at 400 West Street in Rocky Hill. This was to be a facility for the State Highway Department's Research and Materials Test Laboratory. The site was located just west of the Palm House. Excavation of the site started, but not long afterward a major twist of events took place on August 25, 1966. A bulldozer operator turned over a slab of rock at a depth of about 12 feet, and noticed that there were several large indentations that were immediately thought to be dinosaur footprint casts.[12] The excavation was immediately stopped and specialists from Wesleyan University and the University of Connecticut descended on the site to evaluate what was found. Action was quickly taken to designate the property as a State Park, devoted to displaying the ancient footprints. The new building's location was moved to the east where the greenhouse was situated.

By the fall of 1966 the metal structure and glass panes were disassembled and put into storage crates. The workers were from the State Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, inmates from the State Jail in Hartford, and trainees of a State Welfare Department program.[13] The stored pieces remained on the site until 1967, when they were moved to a property in Bloomfield held by the State Agriculture and Natural Resources Department, according to a newspaper article that quoted Joseph N. Gill, the department's Commissioner.[14]

As part of my research about the whereabouts of the greenhouse, I contacted several Connecticut State departments known to have been involved or that may know something about the greenhouse. I was able to access many files within the Department of Veteran Affairs and found many contemporary photographs in archives. But to my dismay, the fate or location of the greenhouse is unknown by any of the players I contacted all these decades later. The question, so far, goes unanswered: what happened to the missing conservatory?

Christopher Pollock has been the Historian in Residence for the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department since 2016, after a career in the interior architecture field. His latest publication is *San Francisco's Golden Gate Park: A Thousand and Seventeen Acres of Stories* (2020). He is a Victorian Society in America Summer Schools alumnus of Newport (2005) and London (2011), as well as study tours to the Midlands (2014) and Northern Ireland (2018).

Notes

1. *Journal* (Meriden), January 14, 1903, 8.
2. *Hartford Courant*, July 29, 1907, 13.
3. *The New York Times*, November 5, 1918, 13.
4. *Hartford Courant*, October 31, 1941, 22.
5. *Hartford Courant*, November 19, 1941, 2.
6. *Hartford Courant*, March 7, 1942, 15.
7. *Record-Journal* (Meriden), April 15, 1942, 13.
8. *Hartford Courant*, March 2, 1952, 7.
9. *Hartford Courant*, March 2, 1952, 7.
10. *Hartford Courant*, March 17, 1966, 14.
11. Memo filed at Connecticut State Library; Department of Veterans' Affairs records (RG073); Series 3. Administrative Files, 1886-1990; Accession: 1992-021; Fitch's Home for Soldiers and Veterans Home and Hospital (Rocky Hill, 1927, 1990); Greenhouse, Removal of.
12. *Hartford Courant*, August 26, 1966, 1.
13. *Hartford Courant*, October 4, 1966, 2.
14. *Hartford Courant*, November 2, 1967, 11.

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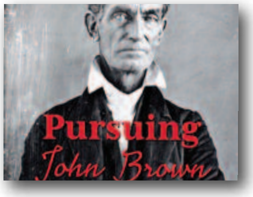

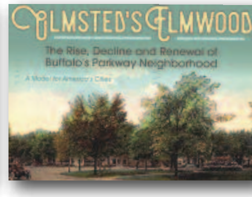

Pursuing John Brown: On the Trail of a Radical Abolitionist

Joyce Dyer. University of Akron Press, 2022.

Joyce Dyer's *Pursuing John Brown* is not yet another biography—although the author does try to examine the life of this nineteenth-century icon. The book is not a tour guide—although Dyer goes to all the significant sites of Brown's experience. Nor is it a memoir—although no one who knows this author can forget her moving memoir of her mother's Alzheimer journey. No, this book is a personal attempt to answer the question: "Who is John Brown?" Is he the Hero of the Abolition Movement and Defender of the Oppressed? Or the Madman of Harpers Ferry and the Murderer of Pottawatomie?

Dyer became interested in John Brown (1800-59) because she lives in the small Ohio town where the abolitionist grew up. Her own house, in fact, is less than 100 feet from the site of the church where he first swore to dedicate his life to the single-minded pursuit of slavery's end. Her journey begins in that town and in several nearby cities and villages where Brown lived at various times trying to make a living for a growing family.

From Ohio, the author goes north to upstate New York, south to what was Virginia (now West Virginia), east to Massachusetts, and west to Iowa and, of course, Kansas. She goes to ancient graveyards to peer at worn headstones. She visits libraries and immerses herself in old books and often forgotten photographs. At one, she holds the diary of James A. Garfield, who wrote on the day of Brown's death: "A dark day for our country. John Brown is to be hung...I have no language to express the conflict of emotion in my heart. I do not justify his acts... But I do accord to him, and I think every man must, honesty of purpose and sincerity of heart."

The journey begins in Hudson, where the author lives and where John Brown grew up, married, and took his seminal oath to end slavery. We go to the traces he has left there, and the places he knew there. We learn what his nineteenth-century neighbors thought of him, including his Sunday School students and the neighbors and merchants to whom he owed money. He owed many people money. And yet, even some of those to whom he was most indebted, sometimes for more than simply dollars, often stood by him despite it all. Heman Oviatt, Hudson's first mayor and a consummate businessman, loaned Brown the astounding sum of $6,000, which was never repaid. He helped Brown buy one of his farms, which proved a bad investment and ended up in foreclosure. But Oviatt refused to condemn him, instead employing him in a wool venture in the nearby town of Richfield. The author wonders what quality it was that Oviatt saw in him.

The section entitled "Losing Almost Everything in Richfield" begins, "Bankruptcy occurred a year before the true sorrows arrived." In 1842 the Brown family of twelve moved to Richfield. They were officially paupers, Brown having declared bankruptcy. As a family, they were allowed to keep "five coats, four blankets, two candlesticks, five pair of boots, and one basket of dried apples." They were also permitted eleven Bibles. "One shovel, one pair of shears, one crow bar, one plow, one hammer, one saw, one pitchfork, one plane, one branding iron, and one harrow"—these were the things John Brown himself was permitted to keep. But in Richfield he lost much more. There, four of his children died one harsh midwinter. He dug their graves through the snow himself.

The journey continues to Harpers Ferry, John Brown's last stand, where he lost two more sons. Dyer points to the irony that Colonel Robert E. Lee was "responsible for John Brown's capture at Harpers Ferry, that J. E. B. Stuart...forced John Brown's surrender in the engine house, that Thomas Jackson (soon to be 'Stonewall') was an officer at the hanging," and that John Wilkes Booth was with the Richmond Grays at the hanging. Then to North Elba, New York, where he is buried. From this rocky and barren place, the author follows the fates of Brown's surviving children and harried wife after the execution.

The book then circles back to the truly controversial chapter of Brown's life: his time in Iowa and Kansas. Brown was in these states on and off from 1856 to 1859. The "troops" of Harpers Ferry trained in Iowa. Part of this story that is seldom told is John Brown's raid into Missouri to gather twelve slaves from the fields and spirit them into Iowa, then Illinois, and finally to the safety of Canada. It reads like an old-fashioned horse opera of the silver screen, including the cooperation of the famous Allen Pinkerton.

But, of course, it is Bleeding Kansas that most confounds us. On the night of May 24–25, 1856, five men from the pro-slavery settlement at Pottawatomie Creek in Franklin County, Kansas, were murdered by a group of abolitionists consisting mostly of John Brown and his four sons. Not killed—but brutally murdered. It is true that the entire territory was rife with violence. It is true that three of the men had threatened the Browns and other Free State men. But it is not without reason that it is known as the Pottawatomie Massacre. Joyce Dyer spends the rest of her book probing how we are to feel about that. You will find that following her on both her travels and her intellectual journey will be enlightening, sometimes disturbing, and always fascinating.

-Reviewed by Patricia S. Eldredge

Patricia Eldredge has worked in several capacities in both History and Historic Preservation. She is a retired consultant in historic paints and colors, and is an emeritus board member of the Victorian Society in America.

Monuments and Myths: The America of Sculptors Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Daniel Chester French

Edited by Andrew Eschelbacher. American Federation of Arts and Hirmer, 2023.

American public sculpture in the late nineteenth century was dominated by the figures of Daniel Chester French and Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Their commanding positions have remained so to this day. Who can forget Saint-Gaudens's *Shaw Memorial* facing the Boston State House or French's overwhelming figure in the Lincoln Memorial closing the mall in Washington? Yet the extent of their significance has been reassessed multiple times, as the perceived importance of pre-Modern American art has been subjected to changing historiographies and tastes. French has been reexamined as recently as 2019 in Harold Holzer's *Monument Man: The Life and Art of Daniel Chester French*. The most recent exploration of the pair and their cultural contexts comes through an exhibition traveling to four venues between May 2023 and May 2025, sponsored by the two institutions that manage their estates—Chesterwood in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and the Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park in Cornish, New Hampshire—and the resulting publication that records these events with supplemental essays examining the two sculptors' accomplishments and legacies.

The book opens with forewords by the curators of the two institutions, Donna Hassler and Rick Kendall, and by Pauline Forlenza, director of the American Federation of Arts. In a preface, Andrew Eschelbacher, Director of Collections and Exhibitions at the Amon Carter Museum and editor of this book, notes that "While not friends per se, French and Saint-Gaudens were genial acquaintances and developed living and working styles that resonated with each other." In an afterword, Charles F. Sams III, Director of the National Park Service, sums up the purpose of the exhibition and publication. Admitting that "some of the ideals represented in their art advanced troubling stereotypes and perspectives on American values," yet the works of Saint-Gaudens and French "have become part of the fabric of the visual culture of our democracy."

The structure of the publication is to compare similar subjects and contrasting approaches of the two artists throughout their careers in the context of aspects of American culture. This is accomplished through five essays by major scholars. In examining the portraiture of the pair, Thayer Tolles of the Metropolitan Museum of Art considers Saint-Gaudens's bust of William Maxwell Evarts (1872-73), a prominent lawyer who served as President Hayes's Secretary of State, with French's bust of the American essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1879), illuminating the networks that connected private portraits with public statuary. In the second essay, Philip Deloria of Harvard University frames the public figures of the two with examinations of Saint-Gaudens's *The Puritan* (1883-86) and French's *The Minute Man* (1871-75), works that "marked local memory while also proclaiming big stories about America." Investigating the complexities of representing the nation in the post-Civil War era, he concludes that still today, "we can be struck by the extraordinary cultural power contained within the genre, even as we remind ourselves of the stories and people left behind." Chief among these ignored groups, of course, were the newly emancipated Black Americans, a subject investigated by Renée Ater of Brown University and the University of Maryland. Ater delves into the representation and meaning of Saint-Gaudens's *Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Regiment Memorial* (1884-97) in light of Civil War memorials and representations of African Americans. Declaring Saint-Gaudens's masterpiece "ground-breaking in its form," including its depiction of individual Black soldiers, Ater shows it to be less radical than several lesser but more obvious pieces, among them Randolph Rogers's *Soldiers and Sailors Monument* (1866-71) in Providence, Rhode Island. Ater is particularly focused on the allegorical female form floating above the group, an image that she relates to the symbolic white figure found in many other works by Saint-Gaudens and French. Kelvin L. Parnell Jr., a doctoral candidate from the University of Virginia, examines commemorative and funerary compositions by comparing contrasting images of Abraham Lincoln by the sculptors, as well as Saint-Gaudens's famous *Adams Memorial* (1886-91) and French's *St. Paul's School Memorial* (1924-29). Curators Donna Hassler and Dana Pilson conclude with histories and discussions of Chesterwood and Aspet, the rural studios, eventual art colonies, and subsequent historic sites of the pair.

Following the essays are eighty color plates, most of them full page. While these plates illustrate the objects comprising the traveling exhibition, including maquettes, medallions, and portrait busts, the full-scale outdoor pieces that are the major subjects of the essays are all fully illustrated as well. Also included is a twenty-two-page chronology comparing the careers of Saint-Gaudens and French throughout their lives.

This deluxe volume, with its generous page dimensions and large typeface, deserves a place in the libraries of all who are moved by the noble works, warts and all, of these remarkable artists.

-Reviewed by Paul Kruty

Paul Kruty has published on a variety of topics in American art and architecture, from Abstract Expressionism, mural painting, and Beaux-Arts sculpture to casement-window hardware and the origins of the American architects' licensing law. Professor Emeritus of Architectural History at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, he is the author of *Frank Lloyd Wright and Midway Gardens*, *Walter Burley Griffin in America*, and *Marion Mahony and Millikin Place*. He is a 1985 alumnus of the Victorian Society Summer School to London and the Midlands.

Building Antebellum New Orleans: Free People of Color and Their Influence

Tara A. Dudley. University of Texas Press, 2021.

New Orleans is a unique American place. Its colonial history is quite different than those of the original thirteen colonies, which created an exotic cultural environment that distinguishes the city to this day. Located at the mouth of the Mississippi River, the city had developed into a major seaport by the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. By then the Spanish, who were the first colonizers, and the French, as well as the Creole culture of the Caribbean, had left their imprint on New Orleans. Incoming waves of "Americans" would influence its future; Louisiana became the eighteenth state in the union in 1812. The city was a melting pot and, until the Civil War, a libertarian society made up of whites, many of them French by birth; Blacks, both free and enslaved; and Creoles, that is mixed-race people from the West Indies. Diversity and complexity are palpable in the character of the city today, even with its extreme commercialization, and particularly expressed in its architecture.

New Orleans's distinctive French and Creole houses have been published widely and studied intensively over many decades, but as in most places these works tend to focus on the most elaborate buildings and elite levels of society. This approach has left most of the built environment and the people who live and work there on the sidelines of history. However, in recent years a growing number of studies of vernacular architecture and communities have contributed to a fuller picture of the past.

Tara A. Dudley has done this for New Orleans in a 2021 book titled *Building Antebellum New Orleans*, in which she explores the nineteenth-century history of the city through the lens of, as the subtitle states, *Free People of Color and Their Influence*. Currently a faculty member in the University of Texas School of Architecture in Austin, Dudley undertook a prodigious amount of research not only in established primary and secondary sources, but also in New Orleans public records and personal histories to form the context for the analysis of the architecture associated with this cultural group and the interpretation of its relationship to the rest of the polyglot city. In this regard, she has created a model of multi-disciplinary vernacular study where architecture embodies the expression of different cultural forces.

The story of free people of color, or as they were termed in the period *gens de couleur libres*, is significant in New Orleans, which had the largest percentage of non-white citizens of any place in the United States. They descended from the union of French or Spanish merchants and Black women in the West Indies and thus had never been enslaved. (New Orleans was home to many enslaved and freed African Americans as well.) Dudley looked deeply into two families of *gens de couleur libres* who were house builders, the Dollioles and Soulés, and explored their roles in the real estate development of New Orleans. In the 1820s and 1830s, the city was rapidly expanding beyond its original plan (*Vieux Carré*) into new *faubourgs* (suburbs) platted on adjacent plantations. Over the next two or three decades, the Dollioles and Soulés capitalized on the delicate status of *gens de couleur libres* that allowed them to own property and accumulate wealth. They began buying lots and building houses for themselves and family members, thus establishing a presence on the land and an economic stake in the city.

Limited to operating within the *gens de couleur libres* community, they designed and built houses that, while restrained in appearance and modest in value, reflected the evolving architectural designs of the period. Creole houses, with their one-story plans and four-bay, front-gable facades with two doors, were the norm, although later houses incorporated French and American Neoclassical-style features popular in mainstream design. The *gens de couleur libres* builders did not work entirely in isolation of the city's varied architectural repertoire. However, they were still marginalized, which limited them to a Creole clientele, excluded from municipal projects, and without the resources to compete for larger jobs. This situation was made worse in the 1850s and 1860s when working-class Irish and German immigrants competed for work in the construction trades.

Also, by this time, the white establishment's tolerance for the *gens de couleur libres* was evaporating amid Jim Crow racism spreading through the South during Reconstruction. Bernard Soulé became politically active and rose in the ranks of the Republican Party, one of the few persons of mixed race to do so, but it became increasingly hard to make a living in New Orleans and the family retreated to France. The loss of civil rights contributed to the Dolliole family's exit from real estate development, but they retained ownership of their homes, which they carefully protected by keeping titles within the extended family. Some descendants continue to live in the city, yet in both cases their roles in the building and social histories of New Orleans became forgotten.

In the process of recovering the story of the *gens de couleur libres* and their role in the growth and development of antebellum New Orleans, Tara A. Dudley has provided new perspectives on the architectural history of the city where middling and lesser buildings, particularly those inhabited by non-whites, are integrated rather than ignored. The product of extensive archival research, the book makes a significant contribution to a fuller understanding of cultural history in this diverse Southern city. By organizing her material around two Creole families, Dudley has created a compelling and readable narrative.

-Reviewed by Neil Larson

Neil Larson is an architectural historian with a special interest in vernacular buildings in New York and New England. Over the past 40 years, he has worked on projects for the National Register of Historic Places. A native of the Hudson River Valley, Larson currently lives on Lake Superior in Minnesota.

Olmsted's Elmwood: The Rise, Decline and Renewal of Buffalo's Parkway Neighborhood, A Model for America's Cities

Clinton E. Brown and Ramona Pando Whitaker. Buffalo Heritage Press, 2022.

The city of Buffalo, in western New York, lies on the shore of Lake Erie at the origin of the Niagara River. Due in part to the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, Buffalo quickly grew into an industrial center and transportation hub. Population growth and cramped living conditions created the need for a respite from the city's congestion. Forward-thinkers believed that "nature," public green spaces within the city, could help the citizens breathe, literally and figuratively, and be a salve for modern life. In 1868, Buffalo's prescient civic leaders turned to Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, designers of Central Park in Manhattan, to provide a solution for Buffalo. The team would plan a comprehensive system of parks and boulevards. This armature for the expanding city consisted of three parks, each with differing uses, linked by tree-lined parkways anchored by a series of residential circles and squares. At the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia Olmsted claimed Buffalo was "the best planned city, as to its streets, public places, and grounds, in the United States, if not in the world." He envisioned that from this framework fine neighborhoods would develop. In the late nineteenth century, Elmwood was becoming just such a place.

In ten chapters, richly illustrated with maps, drawings, and photographs (historic and recent), Olmsted's Elmwood presents nearly two hundred years of history. It follows the arc of Buffalo's development from the removal of its Native inhabitants to the initial surveys for the Holland Land Company and the town's first city plan by Ralph Ellicott in 1804 to Olmsted and Vaux's pivotal visit. It establishes how Elmwood's character was defined early on by its primarily white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant residents (and a general "anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant" sentiment) and the explosion of residential building prompted, in part, by the Pan-American Exposition of 1901 in Buffalo. Description of its changing character in the first half of the twentieth century, unfortunate urban renewal projects, and decline follow. It concludes with grass-roots initiatives, present-day civic revitalization and historic preservation efforts, and the proposal of Elmwood as a model for other cities.

Throughout, numerous sidebars expand beyond the narrative. Presented are the neighborhood's cultural, educational, religious, and public service institutions, including the Buffalo State Asylum for the Insane (today the Richardson Olmsted Campus), a joint project of Olmsted and the iconic American architect H. H. Richardson circa 1872, and verbal "snapshots" of Elmwood's commercial blocks from the 1920s through the 1990s. Subjects worthy of further study include Elmwood's early nurseries and horticultural societies, contributions made by women in construction and real estate development, and Buffalo architect Louise Blanchard Bethune, the first woman admitted into the American Institute of Architects. Two appendices follow the text. The first deals with the architectural styles found along Elmwood's blocks—Queen Anne, Shingle, Colonial and Tudor Revival, and Craftsman. The second illustrates successful examples of adaptive reuse and appropriate design for new construction within the historic context.

This book is many things. It is at once a history and a reference. It presents landscape-related subjects such as the rural cemetery. (One of the earliest and finest examples, Forest Lawn, 1849, lies at its northeast boundary.) We learn about the individuals who shaped the landscape, Olmsted and Vaux, of course, but also A. J. Downing and local civil engineers and horticulturalists Marsden Davey, George K. Radner, and William McMillian. This is a record of how landscape changes through use, Elmwood's transition from forest to farmland to horticultural nursery grounds to streetcar suburb, and how the landscape changed over time, when mansions built by the wealthy were demolished and their large lots were subdivided and rebuilt with more density by the generations that followed.

One could quibble with minor aspects such as a few misspellings and illustration placement that doesn't always coincide with the chronology. Very short early chapters could be combined and the chapter seven text about houses and owners reads a little like a laundry list. Puzzling is the omission of any mention of pioneering Olmsted scholar, Charles Capen McLaughlin, an early editor of *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*. And to clarify: it is not really **Olmsted's** Elmwood. The book's title uses the famous landscape architect as a calling card; he envisioned such neighborhoods but he was responsible for the broad strokes, not Elmwood specifically. The most serious objection is the result of a mixed blessing, one that practitioners and scholars deal with when they have the benefit of a wealth of information. This book is based on decades of research that resulted in eight National Register of Historic Places nominations and surveys inventorying nearly 5,000 resources. One of the hardest things to do is to distill and synthesize—to edit, edit, edit—in a way that best tells the story to the reader.

Olmsted's contribution to Buffalo was comprehensive in scope. The same can be said about this book. It is a wide-ranging, visually rich history of Elmwood that the reader can turn to again and again for information on various aspects of the subject. Olmsted's Elmwood begins with the acknowledgement that a "village made this book." Indeed, and it is the continued pride, resilience, and commitment of hundreds of individuals and organizations that will ensure Elmwood's future as a community.

-Reviewed by Carol Grove

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 an author of the forthcoming *Buildings of Missouri* (University of Virginia Press in conjunction with the Society of Architectural Historians, 2024). Grove's articles can be found in *Landscape Journal*, *Journal of Society of Architectural Historians*, and *Nineteenth Century*.

Only the Clothes on Her Back: Clothing and the Hidden History of Power in the 19th Century United States

Laura F. Edwards. Oxford University Press, 2022.

Legal historian Laura F. Edwards adds to the growing scholarship of "hidden histories" of textiles and clothing with her book *Only the Clothes on her Back*. Edwards argues that, in the first decades of the United States, there was a body of law regarding the status of textiles enabling even people without individual rights to make legal claims to textiles; the law was about upholding order by putting the textiles back where they belonged. People inhabiting the legal status of "slaves," "wives," and "servants" could use the legal principles of textile property, even if those individuals might not be able to claim legal ownership of their own bodies. Edwards then traces the declining power of these claims in the first half of the nineteenth century as the push for equality focused on individual rights.

Edwards divides her book into three sections: Part I, "Old Clothes in a New Country," explains the legal principles of textiles; Part II, "Protective Coverings in a Hostile World," focuses on some unexpected ways that marginalized people used textiles; and Part III, "Rags," is concerned with institutions.

Part I considers the long-standing body of law regarding textiles, based on common practice within local communities, and allowing even marginalized people to claim ownership of their own clothing, and textiles within their possession. Edwards notes that many textile-related cases have been overlooked as property cases because they were prosecuted under criminal law (people without individual rights had no recourse in civil law) and because of the shift in the kinds of evidence used in court. In the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, material objects were often produced in court as evidence, but by the mid-nineteenth century there was a shift to written documents, which continues today. As a fashion historian and scholar of physical objects, I thought Edwards's recovery of this history was an interesting parallel to the material turn in other areas of scholarship.

The heart of Edwards's argument is in Part II, in which she discusses the way people, particularly married white women, were able to make use of textile possessions as more than just consumer goods. Clothing and textiles in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were valuables that could be traded as currency, used to establish credit, and stored up as a form of capital. Edwards points out that some married women in the United States engaged in business under their own names, despite the legal doctrine of coverture, which subsumed a married woman's identity under that of her husband and made married women unable to form contracts. The credit and capital represented by textiles made it possible for wives to engage in business transactions despite their legal status. In fact, Edwards argues that the economic transactions carried out by people legally designated as "slaves," "wives," and others without individual legal rights should be understood as a key part of the United States' economy—not just an underground or informal economy but part of the economy as a whole.

Part III, "Rags," traces the multiple factors that came together to dim the importance and power of the legal principles of textiles as the nineteenth century progressed. Readers of *Nineteenth Century* might be particularly interested in the mid-nineteenth-century case of five dresses stolen from Charles Lohman in New York City. The dresses were actually the property of Lohman's wife, Ann (aka the abortionist Madam Restell), who had just been released from prison, but by 1850 the case was prosecuted primarily based on the individual rights of her husband rather than on the legal principles of textiles. Written laws overshadowed unwritten practices by this point in the nineteenth century. Abstract individual rights were emphasized over traditional hierarchical family and community structure and keeping public order. The practice of law and legal education were increasingly professionalized, specialized, and opaque to the lay person. Within federalism, local courts and lay adjudicators became less important. Enslaved labor, industrialization, and mechanization in the production of cotton devaluated textiles of a variety of fibers and destabilized textiles as a secure form of capital. A widow's used dress, which might have been seen as a valuable asset in the late eighteenth century, was cast as a tawdry spectacle by the time that the widowed Mary Todd Lincoln enlisted Black couturier Elizabeth Keckly to help to sell her wardrobe in 1867.

For scholars used to considering clothing and textiles as art and material culture, this book is helpful in drawing our attention to the perhaps usually invisible legal principles behind the ownership of these objects. The naming of each chapter after a person and a textile possession—e.g., "Polly's Yarn: Legal Principles," based on yarn stolen from an enslaved woman in South Carolina in 1842—is derived from a court case, log book, or other text. However, Edwards is a deft chronicler of principles, rather than people. Edwards uses their circumstances as an example of a legal principle or historical theme she is exploring. For example, "Jane Cooley's Loom: Capital" draws from the diaries of Jane Cooley's daughters Elizabeth and Amanda written in the 1840s–1850s, but the work of bringing these historical figures to life as compelling characters is left for other scholars. This work adds another layer to the existing scholarship of textiles and clothing, which usually tends to emphasize the cultural meanings of things, by focusing on the legal framework around textiles.

-Reviewed by Rebecca Jumper Matheson

Rebecca Jumper Matheson (JD, University of Texas at Austin; MA, Fashion Institute of Technology; PhD, Bard Graduate Center) is a fashion historian. Matheson's research focuses on nineteenth- and twentieth-century American women's dress, using interdisciplinary approaches to discover women's narratives as designers, makers, sellers, and consumers. Matheson is the author of two monographs, *The Sunbonnet: An American Icon in Texas* (2009) and *Young Originals: Emily Wilkens and the Teen Sophisticate* (2015). She is an adjunct instructor at the Fashion Institute of Technology, in the MA program in Fashion and Textile Studies.

Killing With Style

Anne-Taylor Cahill

Today lawsuits abound for even the most trivial issues. However, prior to the late 1860s there was another way to settle disagreements - the duel. In 1777 a group of Irish gentlemen proclaimed the rules of dueling in the *Code Duello*. Dueling was a very stylized method of fighting and there were very specific protocols regarding the time of day and place to duel, including such things as the number of shots or wounds required for satisfaction of honor. The duties of seconds (substitutes) were clearly laid out as well as appropriate dress for the occasion. It was suggested that one wear a white shirt if dueling in the snow so as to make it more difficult for your opponent to get a good aim at you.

Verbal insults were the usual cause to duel, and the challenge was offered in various ways. In 1750 one English gentleman challenged another by snatching his hat and spitting in it! Once the challenge had been issued seconds were chosen. Each combatant chose his second, who then acted for him by arranging the date, time and place of the duel. It was incumbent upon the seconds to try to attempt reconciliation between the two duelists if possible. If unsuccessful, the second would arrange for a doctor to be present. Most duels were not fought "to the death" but only to the drawing of "first blood." This was not always the case as in the famous political duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, in which Hamilton died of his wounds.

The usual weapons of choice were pistols or swords. The favored pistol was the smoothbore flintlock pistol which most affluent households had on hand. Even so, these were difficult to manage, accuracy was problematic, and often these pistols misfired. According to the *Code Duello* a misfire was equal to a shot. Although pistols were favored, swords were certainly acceptable. In 1842 Abraham Lincoln narrowly escaped a sword duel. A letter in a Springfield newspaper mocked the State Auditor, one James Shields. So enraged was Shields that he tracked down the alleged author–Abraham Lincoln. Challenged to a duel, the two men and their seconds met on Bloody Island located in the middle of the Mississippi River. The weapon of choice was the cavalry broadsword. After some convincing, the seconds persuaded Shields that Lincoln did not write the offending letter. The duel was canceled.

The Aftermath of a Rivalry, A Sword Duel Between Women, c. 1900. As published in *the La Parisien*.

One of the most popular American dueling grounds was in Bladensburg, Maryland. It was just a short carriage ride from Washington, D.C. This was quite convenient for irate legislators who wished to fight it out over some perceived insult. Dueling was illegal in D.C. but not in Maryland.

In the American West, the most likely first duel was between Wild Bill Hickok and one David Tutt in 1865. No one was quite sure of the cause for the duel. Some said it was about a card game and others said it was about a woman. In any case, the showdown took place in the town square with a large breathless audience in attendance. The story goes that at 75 feet Hickok shouted, "Don't come any closer, Dave." At this Tutt drew his revolver and fired. The shot went wild, whereupon Hickok coolly drew his revolver and shot Tutt dead with a bullet to his chest. Because Hickok had adhered to the *Code Duello* (then called The Code of the West) he was acquitted of a manslaughter charge.

Men who refused to fight were subject to being "posted." This consisted of a public statement posted in a newspaper or a pamphlet branding them as cowards. The refused party's posting would go something like this: In justice to my character, I denounce to the world, Mr. X as a coward, a scoundrel etc. These postings never meant much but made the refused party feel better about themselves.

Of course, let us not forget the ladies. Did they really duel? Oh my, yes! Sometimes their duels became quite vicious. Why did

Astié de Valsayre vs. Miss Shelby. As published in *The Illustrated Police News*, October 4, 1886.

ladies duel? Usually it was about lovers, personal insults, family insults and even flower arrangements.

In June 1829, two Russian ladies, Madam Olga Zaraova and Madam Ekaterina Palesova, fought a duel. No one really knows why they fought but it was understood that these two had hated each other for years. Using their husband's broad swords, they met at an agreed-upon spot—a nearby birch grove. Their chosen seconds were the governesses of their respective daughters. In keeping with the *Code Duello*, the seconds made an attempt at reconciliation. Their efforts were rewarded by the two duelists furiously turning on them with threats of mayhem. The duel itself was quick and fatal. Olga died at once from a single blow to the head; Ekaterina died the next day having been struck in the abdomen. A curious footnote to this event: 6 years later the daughters of these two re-enacted the duel. Alexandria Zaraova neatly killed Anna Palesova with one blow. Thus, it was deemed that she had redeemed her mother Madam Olga's honor.

In 1892 in Vaduz, the capital of Liechtenstein, was the scene of a truly remarkable duel between Princess Pauline Metternich and Countess Anastasia Kielmannsegg. It was all over flower arrangements. Princess Pauline was appointed Honorary President of the Vienna Music and Theatre Exhibition. Countess Anastasia was appointed head of the Ladies Flower Committee.

Princess Pauline, who was quite persnickety, was none too pleased with the flower displays. The ladies took issue and had strong words–very strong words. So enraged was Princess Pauline that she challenged Countess Anastasia to a duel.

They agreed that whoever drew first blood was the winner. At the designated time and place the two ladies, their seconds, and Baroness Lubinski (a medical doctor) all met for the fight. Using rapiers, the duel went quickly, with the Princess cutting the Countess' nose. So shocked at what she had done, the Princess threw up her hands in horror. This allowed the Countess to cut the Princess' arm. The Princess was declared the winner, as she had drawn first blood. Apparently, this very unfeminine activity made the newspapers and was written up with all due verve and drama. However, the papers failed to mention one interesting detail–the ladies fought topless!

It should be noted that the *Code Duello* made no provision for topless combatants.

FOR FURTHER READING:

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

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Articles should be 1,500 to 6,000 words in length, with illustrations and notes as appropriate. Submissions related to the subject are encouraged in the fields of architectural history, landscape architecture, fine arts, design, biography, photography and material culture. Manuscripts should conform to the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* and submitted as a Microsoft Word document. Illustrations should be submitted as either .jpg, .tiff, .eps or .pdf, 300 dpi or greater. It is the responsibility of the author to secure the rights to publish all images. The Victorian Society in America and the editors assume no responsibility for the loss or damage of any material.

Submissions for the **Fall 2024** issue are due by **August 1, 2024**.

Email submissions to:

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AN INVITATION TO JOIN

Since 1966, The Victorian Society in America has been a leader in the appreciation and preservation of this country's nineteenth and early twentieth century heritage.

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